

Parasha Vayeira

- Genesis 18:1-22:24
- 2 Kings 4:1-37
- Luke 1:26-38, 24:36-53

The Torah Portion at a Glance

“Vayeira YHWH” are the first two words found in this week’s Torah parasha. The phrase simply means “YHWH appeared.” In this portion, YHWH reveals Himself

to Abraham three days after his circumcision at age 99; but Abraham rushes off to prepare a meal for three visitors who appear in the desert heat. One of the three announces that in exactly one year, the barren Sarah will give birth to a son. Sarah laughs.

Abraham (or “Avraham” in Hebrew) pleads with YHWH to spare the wicked city of Sodom. Two of the three messengers arrive in the doomed city, where Abraham's nephew, Lot, extends his hospitality to them and protects them from the evil intentions of a Sodomite mob. The two guests reveal that they have come to overturn the place, and to save Lot and his family. Lot's wife turns into a salt pillar when she disobeys the command to not look back at the burning city as they flee.

While taking shelter in a cave, Lot's two daughters (believing that they and their father are the only ones left alive in the world) get their father drunk, lie with him, and become pregnant. The two sons born from this incident father the nations of Moab and Amon.

Avraham moves to Gerar, where the Philistine king Avimelech takes Sarah -- who is presented as Avraham's sister -- to his palace. In a dream, YHWH warns Avimelech that he will die unless he returns the woman to her husband. Avraham explains that he feared he would be killed over Sarah.

YHWH remembers His promise to Sarah and gives her and Avraham a son, who is named Isaac (“Yitzchak” in Hebrew, meaning "will laugh"). Isaac is circumcised at the age of eight days; Avraham is 100 years old, and Sarah 90, at their child's birth.

Hagar and Ishmael are banished from Avraham's home and wander in the desert; Elohim hears the cry of the dying lad and saves his life by showing his mother a well. Avimelech makes a treaty with Avraham at Be'er Sheva, where Abraham gives him seven sheep as a sign of their truce.

YHWH tests Abraham's devotion by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount) in Jerusalem. Isaac is bound and placed on the altar, and Abraham raises the knife to slaughter his son. A voice from heaven calls to stop him; a ram, caught in the undergrowth by its horns, is offered in Isaac's place. Abraham receives the news of the birth of a daughter, Rebecca, to his nephew Bethuel.

(adapted from chabad.org)



The Messiah in the Torah Portion

It is possible for two people to look at the exact same object and see something totally different. Some glance at a rose and view the thorns, while others can look at the same flower and focus on the color of the petals. Judaism, as a whole, looks at the offering of Isaac at Mount Moriah as an extreme test of Avraham's faith. The Encyclopedia Judaica says that the "Akeidah has become in Jewish thought the supreme example of self-sacrifice in obedience to the Almighty's will." For centuries believers in the Old Testament have spoken this Biblical account, coupled with two short prayers every morning as a way to remember obedience to YHWH. The Jewish people call this reciting the "Akeidah." (The prayers and the recitation are provided below.) This daily recitation is a reminder of the mercy and judgment of YHWH coming together in perfect unity. "Akeidah" is the Hebrew word for "binding." It is only used in one verse in the entire Bible in Beresheet 22:9, when Avraham actually bound up or tied up his son to the altar to kill him. This specific usage of the Hebrew word is found nowhere else in the Scriptures and appears here to stress the fact that Avraham was willing to sacrifice everything for YHWH.

We can read the account of "Akeidah" and see Abraham's test of faith AND a startling prophecy of our Master Y'shua. The story of Avraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice is a vivid portrayal of how the Savior offered His life and was later resurrected. Avraham offered his only son. YHWH did the same with Y'shua. Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice. Y'shua carried the wood of His sacrifice. The similarities go on and on to show us the Almighty's plan of the ages. The enemy didn't surprise YHWH when he plotted to have Y'shua nailed to the tree. This plan was already set as Y'shua is the "lamb slain from the foundation of the earth." So, if the prophetic death of Y'shua is so clear to us, why is it so difficult for others to see? Why is it that many Jewish people never consider the similarities between the Akeidah and the sacrifice of Y'shua?

The Apostle / Rabbi Paul states, "You should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in," Romans 11:25. Jewish Israel is blind to the Messiah. The good news is that this blindness is only in part and is only temporary. The scales of darkness cover the sight of Israel until the "fullness of the gentiles comes in." We are experiencing this very move of YHWH today. The Gentiles, the nations, are recognizing their identity and the emptiness of man made religion. The emptiness of the Gentiles has caused millions throughout the world to search for the Hebrew roots of Christianity and find fullness in the Messianic faith of the Apostles. This move towards Hebraic worship is allowing the Jewish people, who have accepted Y'shua, a place to worship and be welcomed. For centuries, conversion to mainstream Catholicism or Christianity was the only choice if a Jewish person wanted to accept the Jewish Messiah of the New Testament. Times are changing. The blindness is being removed and the original faith of the apostles is being restored. Jewish people are recognizing that Y'shua of Nazareth is the Messiah. Many are coming to faith in Him because of the witness of the Scriptures that speak prophetically of Messiah. This week's Torah portion is an eye-opening revelation of Messiah that can change lives. As you study, take extra time to pray for the Jewish people. Ask YHWH for their eyes to be opened to Y'shua. Pray that as people study the Torah that they will come to the realization of the Living Torah Y'shua.

Below is a chart of the various types and shadows of our Savior found in the Akeidah. As you read and study these passages, pause to pray for the lost. Take time to praise YHWH for His Son Y'shua.

| Avraham and Isaac | Y'shua's Death and Resurrection |
|---|---|
| Avraham offered his only son (Genesis 22:2-12). | YHWH offered his only Son (John 3:16). |
| Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice (Genesis 22:5). | Y'shua carried the cross for the sacrifice (John 19:17). |
| Isaac cried out to his father (Genesis 22:7). | Y'shua cried out to His Father (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). |
| Isaac escaped death after three days (Genesis 22:4). | Y'shua rose from the dead on the third day (Matthew 16:21; Mark 16:2-4; Luke 9:22). |
| Avraham indicated YHWH will provide a lamb for the sacrifice (Genesis 22:8). | YHWH provided Y'shua as The Lamb for the sacrifice (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29-36, Revelation 5:6, 7:17). |
| YHWH provided a ram, a <i>male</i> sheep, as a substitutionary sacrifice (Genesis 22:13). | YHWH provided a male, Y'shua, as a substitutionary sacrifice. |
| The ram was caught by its horns (head) in a thicket (thorns) (Genesis 22:13). | Y'shua wore a crown of thorns on his head (Matthew 27:29), a symbol of the sin He bore (Genesis 3:18). |
| Sacrifice offered at specific location on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2,9). | For hundreds of years, sacrifices would be offered from the same spot inside Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple (2 Chronicles 3:1). When Y'shua is crucified outside the city walls on the same mountain, the veil within the Temple is rent in two (Mark 15:38). |
| The ram was YHWH's provision (Genesis 22:13-14). | Abraham prophetically named the place pointing to the crucifixion where YHWH made the ultimate provision: the sacrifice of His Son for sin (Hebrews 9:26-28). |
| Abraham believed that YHWH would raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:19). | YHWH raised Y'shua from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). |

Applying the Portion to Life Today

Abraham is known as the patriarch who showed unwavering kindness and hospitality. This week's Torah portion demonstrates the willingness of Avinu Avraham (Our Father Abraham) to care for others. The reading begins by stating that Abe was meeting with YHWH in His tent alone. Surely, this one on one prayer time with the Creator of the moon and stars was an opportunity not to be missed. But miss it he did. Genesis 18 shows that while Abraham was in the middle of his prayer time, he lifted up his eyes and saw a group of sojourners coming towards his tent. Avraham immediately ran to meet the visitors. (Can you imagine running just a few days after being circumcised?) The Jewish Talmud asserts that hospitality should take priority even over "welcoming the Divine presence."

Abraham greeted his visitors with sincerity and care. He gave them food and washed their feet. Avraham had Sarah prepare her “world famous” flour cakes for them to taste. Abraham showed hospitality to these visitors before he even knew who they were. This is true kindness. This is true chesed.

The Hebrew word “chesed” is most often translated as “grace” or “kindness” in English Bibles. This term implies an action of unmerited favor in a physical manner. Grace isn’t something you believe. Grace/chesed is something you do. Abraham showed grace to his visitors. In a similar fashion, Lot showed chesed to the visitors of Sodom and Gomorrah. He insisted that they spend the night in his home and not on the street. Perhaps it was the chesed that Lot showed to the visitors that allowed him to be rescued from destruction. Perhaps it was the kindness that Abraham shared that led to the blessing of Isaac. Kindness has reciprocal effects that set in motion chains of good events. When you reach out to someone to meet a need, you are in essence putting your needs in YHWH’s hands. Abraham left his own tent of meeting to welcome guests and was never the same.

Y’shua said the greatest commandment was to love YHWH and to love your neighbor as yourself. One way in which we express love to YHWH is through the kindness / chesed that we show others. This week, look for new ways to be hospitable. Ask the Ruach HaKodesh/ Holy Spirit to reveal to you a way to show kindness each day of this week. Spend time in prayer for others and spend extra time meeting the needs of others. As you replicate Abraham’s actions you will experience the blessing of chesed yourself.

Portion Points to Ponder

1. What does the Hebrew name of this Torah portion mean?
2. Read the Haftarah portion of 2 Kings 4:1-37. How does this relate to this week’s Torah portion?
3. Read the Newer Testament sections of Luke 1:26-38, 24:36-53. Why were these passages chosen to correspond to this week’s reading? What did you learn from these words?
4. Who were the three people that met Avraham in Genesis 18?
5. How did Avraham greet his visitors and show hospitality?
6. Avraham prepared milk and meat for his guests. Later the Torah says not to “boil a kid in its mother’s milk” (Exodus 23:19.) Did Avraham violate the Torah? Is eating a cheeseburger wrong?
7. Avraham’s son was named Isaac or “Yitzchak” in Hebrew. What does this name mean?
8. YHWH doesn’t automatically destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin. The cry of their sinful ways reached the ears of Heaven and YHWH sent messengers to the city. How does this show YHWH’s mercy?
9. Did Avraham overstep his relationship with YHWH when he pleaded with the Almighty not to destroy the city? Even Abe said “I am but dust and ashes.”
10. How was Avraham’s negotiations with YHWH for the cities similar to Moshe’s pleading for Israel in Deuteronomy 9:13-14?
11. What does it mean in Genesis 19 when the Torah says that Lot “sat at the gate of Sodom”?

12. Why would Lot pressure the two messengers to stay in his home and not in the streets of Sodom?
13. What food did Lot and the messengers eat the night of Sodom's destruction? What could this be symbolic of?
14. Where 10 righteous people found in the city of Sodom or Gomorrah?
15. Did YHWH destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sinfulness or because YHWH could not find a remnant of righteousness in the towns? Is there a difference?
16. A famous television evangelist once said that "If God doesn't destroy the USA, he owes an apology to Sodom and Gomorrah." Do you agree? Isn't there more than 10 righteous people in America?
17. Lot's wife looked back towards the destruction. How does this compare to Luke 9:62 when Y'shua said, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of YHWH"?
18. The daughters of Lot thought they were the only people left in the world. They seduced their father to preserve his seed and the human blood line. Did Lot's daughter's sin? Would Lot have laid with his daughters if he had not been drunk?
19. The Moabites and the Amorites descended from Lot's daughter's relationship with their father. Who were these people?
20. Again, Avraham tells Sarah to answer the authorities that she is his sister. Was this wrong?
21. A type of plague came upon the king who took Sarah into his home even though he did not have relations with her. Why? What was in the heart of the king?
22. In Genesis 20:18, the king refers to Avraham as a prophet or "navi" in Hebrew. What does this mean?
23. Avraham reveals that Sarah is the daughter of his father but not his mother. When Sarah said she was Abe's sister, was she telling the whole truth? When is it permissible to only reveal partial truth?
24. How old was Isaac/Yitzchak when Avraham circumcised him? Why?
25. In Genesis 21:18 YHWH promises to make a nation of Ishmael. Why? Who are these people today?
26. When Hagar is cast out, she puts Ishmael under a tree and prepares to die. YHWH hears her prayers and answers her. Ishmael is saved. Was this part of YHWH's plan?
27. What is the meaning of the covenant made between Avraham and Avimelech that was made at Bersheva? Where is Beersheva today?
28. Genesis 22 states that YHWH tested Avraham? How many times was Abe tested? Can you name at least 10 tests of his faith?
29. Explain how the binding of Isaac was prophetic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Messiah Y'shua.
30. On what mountain was Isaac offered? Why is this important?
31. "Avraham rose very early in the morning" to obey YHWH's directions to sacrifice his own son. Do you obey YHWH with a willing heart?
32. The place where YHWH provided a ram in place of Isaac was called "YHWH Yireh" by Avraham. What does this mean to you? How has YHWH provided supernaturally for you?
33. Read and pray the Akeidah prayers below to grow your relationship with YHWH.

Akeidah Prayers:

“Our Elohim and Elohim of our forefathers, remember us with a favorable memory before you, and recall us with a recollection of salvation and mercy from the primeval loftiest of heavens. Remember on our behalf – O Elohim, our Elohim – the love of the Patriarchs, Avraham, Yitzchak, an Isra’el, Your servant; the covenant, the kindness, and the oath that You swore to our father Avraham at Mount Moriah, and the Akeidah, when he bound his son Yitzchak atop the altar, as it is written in Your Torah.”

Genesis 22:1-19 recitation

“Some time later Elohim tested Avram. He said to him, “Avram!” “Here I am,” he replied. Then Elohim said, “Take your son, your only son, Yitzchak, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.” Early the next morning Avram got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Yitzchak. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place Elohim had told him about. On the third day Avram looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.” Avram took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Yitzchak, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Yitzchak spoke up and said to his father Avram, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Avram replied. “The fire and wood are here,” Yitzchak said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Avram answered, “Elohim himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place Elohim had told him about, Avram built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Yitzchak and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of Yahweh called out to him from heaven, “Avram! Avram!” “Here I am,” he replied. “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear Elohim, because

you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” Avram looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Avram called that place Yahweh Yirah - Yahweh Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of Yahweh it will be provided.” The angel of Yahweh called to Avram from heaven a second time and said, “I swear by myself, declares Yahweh, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.” Then Avram returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Avram stayed in Beersheba.”

Akeidah Prayers:

“Master of the Universe! May it be Your will, Yahweh, our Elohim, and Elohim of our forefathers, that You remember for our sake the covenant of our forefathers. Just as Avraham our forefather suppressed his mercy for his only son and wished to slaughter him in order to do Your will, so may Your mercy suppress Your anger from upon us and may Your mercy overwhelm Your attributes. May You overstep with us the line of Your Torah and deal with us – O Yahweh our Elohim – with the attribute of kindness and the attribute of mercy. In Your great goodness may You turn aside Your burning wrath from Your people, Your city, Your land, and Your heritage. Fulfill for us, Yahweh, our Elohim, the word You pledged through Moshe, Your servant, as it is said: ‘I shall remember My covenant with Ya’acov; and also My covenant with Yitzchak, and also My covenant with Avraham shall I remember, and the land shall I remember.’ Awmain.”

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.