

Drash on Lech Lecha (Gen. 12:1-17:27)

Ahavat Yeshua DC Service

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Parashat Lech Lecha begins the middle third of the first Book of the Torah, Beresheet (Genesis in English). The Jewish name of the *book* means *In The Beginning* and the English means *origin* or *mode of formation*, in this case, of the Universe as well as the Jewish people.

The name of this *parashat* is derived from the fifth and sixth Hebrew words which mean *get out*. According to the Wikipedia article on [Lech Lecha](#):

The parashah tells the stories of [God's](#) calling of Abram (who would become [Abraham](#)), Abram's [passing off his wife Sarai](#) as his sister, Abram's dividing [the land](#) with his nephew [Lot](#), the [war between the four kings and the five](#), the [covenant between the pieces](#), Sarai's tensions with her maid [Hagar](#) and Hagar's son [Ishmael](#), and the covenant of circumcision ([brit milah](#)).

The first eleven chapters of the Torah are the prologue for the story of Abraham, one of the big names in The Bible, and that is certainly not news to anyone here. Indeed, uncommon are those in the world even in this day who are ignorant of Abraham. Here is the first paragraph of the [Wikipedia article about Abraham](#):

Abraham (originally Abram) is the common patriarch of the [Abrahamic religions](#), including [Judaism](#), [Christianity](#), and [Islam](#). In Judaism, he was the founding father of the [covenant of the pieces](#), the special relationship between the [Hebrews](#) and [God](#); in Christianity, he was the spiritual progenitor of all believers, Jewish or [Gentile](#) (non-Jewish); and in Islam he is seen as a link in the [chain of prophets](#) that begins with [Adam](#) and culminates in [Muhammad](#).

Yah-a-mod, Autumn bat Lamuel.

Autumn will bless us with the Hebrew and English of the first four verses of this parashat (Complete Jewish Bible) after I have read in English the last seven verses of the preceding parashat:

²⁶ Terach lived seventy years and fathered Avram, Nachor and Haran. ²⁷ Here is the genealogy of Terach. Terach fathered Avram, Nachor and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. ²⁸ Haran died before his father Terach in the land where he was born, in Ur of the Kasdim. ²⁹ Then Avram and Nachor took wives for themselves. The name of Avram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nachor's wife was Milkah the daughter of Haran. He was the

father of Milkah and of Yiskah. ³⁰ Sarai was barren – she had no child. ³¹ Terach took his son Avram, his son Haran's son Lot, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Avram's wife; and they left Ur of the Kasdim to go to the land of Kena'an. But when they came to Haran, they stayed there. ³² Terach lived 205 years, and he died in Haran.

Autumn:

¹ NOW ADONAI said to Avram, "Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

⁴ So Avram went, as ADONAI had said to him, and Lot went with him. Avram was 75 years old when he left Haran.

There is as much uncertainty about this history as there is interest throughout history in knowing the life of this man Abraham before he left Harran. There is not time in this drash to review all the thoughts regarding, for example, the birthplace of Abraham, where he grew up, what kind of upbringing he had, and significant events in his early life. If you start with the Wikipedia articles on [Lech Lecha](#) and [Abraham](#) you quickly get into where we are in this day and age about these theories regarding the genesis of Abraham.

For example, have you heard Abraham as a young man was thrown into a fiery furnace by Nimrod and was preserved therein by God for three days, unlike his brother Haran who immediately died? This account is considered factual by many adherents of the Talmud. Where did this tale come from?

Well, from the name of the commonly thought birthplace of Abraham, [Ur of the Chaldees](#). Kasdim in Hebrew or Chaldea in English refers to a country thought by most to have been to the southwest of the lower Euphrates River. Ur is often thought to be a city therein. However, the Hebrew root of Ur (Strong's number H217) means *flame* and has been thought by some to refer to an actual fire as opposed to a specific geographic place, or perhaps it is a double entendre, and conjectures arose therefrom. In the verse I read about Haran's death, is *Ur of the Kasdim* an appositive of *the land where he was born*, or is it referring to a literal flame within which he died somewhere in the land of Kasdim? At any rate, wherever Haran was born, it seems likely Abraham was born there as well, since Terach stayed there until he left Kasdim with Abraham only to stop in Harran, thought to be the contemporary village of Harran just north of the border of contemporary southeastern Turkey.

Another ambiguity is found in the verse about Haran's death concerning the English word *before*. Does it mean Haran died chronologically before his father died, or that he died while his father was watching? The Hebrew is clear, however. The word *panee* meaning *face* is not translated in either the *Tree of Life* or the *Complete Jewish Bible* translations. The translated literal order of the Hebrew is:

And died Haran before the face of Terach his father in the land of his birth in Ur of the Chaldeans.

The Scriptures provide us with some ages of some of the people in the account just read that help us understand the timeline, but even with this information come questions. When was Abraham born? If he was firstborn of Terach, then according to the first verse I read he was born when Terach was 70. But Terach died in Harran at the age of two hundred and five and Abraham left Harran at the age of 75 after Terach had died. So Abraham could not have been Terach's firstborn, as Terach would have needed to be at least one hundred and thirty when Abraham was born. Assuming *Haran* was Terach's firstborn, then he was probably half a century older than his brother Abram. As an aside, Terach's age of one hundred and thirty when Avram was born seems to reduce the impressiveness of Abraham being one hundred when Isaac was born, but don't forget that after Sarah died when Isaac was an adult, Abraham had six more children with his concubine Keturah, according to First Chronicles chapter 1 verse 32. Make no mistake—it was *Sarah's* age when Isaac was born that made everyone laugh.

The reading also stated Abraham married Sarai after Haran's death who was already the father of Lot when he died. This is another argument for Abraham not being the firstborn, and that the order in the genealogies is based not upon birth date but upon the relative wisdom of the siblings, just as Shem is the first of Noah's children in First Chronicles chapter 1 verse 1. But then surely Joseph would be listed first in any genealogy of Yaacov's children, right? Or perhaps it is not always so and we have to make educated guesses in each case.

The Christian perspective on Abraham is significantly informed by Stephen's statement to the Sanhedrin in Acts chapter 7. Here are the first four verses of the chapter according to the Tree of Life version:

¹ Then the kohen gadol said, "Are these things so?"

² Stephen declared, "Brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. ³ He said to him, 'Leave your country and your relatives, and come here to the land that I will show you.' ⁴ Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God moved him to this land where you now live.

It is clear *parashat Lech Lecha* does not mention this version of the history. Yet the court did not interrupt Stephen about this apparent misstatement. So the Oral Tradition *did* mention this version of the history and the Sanhedrin had no argument with it. Stephen is reported to have said *Mesopotamia* by the author of the Book of *Acts*, which was written in Greek. Was this court case conducted in Greek, or was something different spoken by Stephen that was translated by the author into *Mesopotamia*?

I could go on and on with these kinds of questions and give this all the attention it deserves. However, that is not what The LORD desires. During my research, I encountered [Who Actually Was Called —](#)

[Terah or Abraham?](#) published online two and a half years ago on the *Seeking God With Elaine* website. When I read it, I perceived this devotion is what The LORD wishes this drash to primarily communicate, even though it seems she was not remembering Stephen's statement. Then I sensed He desires it be shared by my own and very dear Elaine, maybe to sound more like Elaine Guthals than I would.

Yahamod, Elaine bat Benyahmeen Moshe.

God wants us to obey His will. However, sometimes, we may not get a lot of clarification on what His plans are. This fuzziness makes us question if we are on the right path. We know, however, that God knows what our choices in life will be and will work it out to His glory. This devotion looks at how God makes sure we are where He wants us to be.

Terah was moving his family. Notice where he was moving to – Canaan. It doesn't say God called Terah to move to Canaan, but that was where [God] wanted *Abram* to be.

We can look at this several ways. Let's say God did call to Terah. He started out in obedience, and then decided he wasn't up to the journey. Terah could have been the father of nations – and he knew where he was going. When Terah bowed out, God used Abram.

Or God could have been planning to use Abram all along. He was just taking preliminary steps to get Abram "... to the land I will show you" [].

Maybe God had to use Terah's move to get Abram used to the idea of going to live somewhere else. You know how we are – we fight change. Maybe God thought Abram would go for the idea if He got him started in the right direction.

Well, that is all speculation. We won't know the answers to the questions until we ask them in glory.

However, we do know one thing – God worked out His plan for Abram's life. He got Abram to Canaan. Whatever part God had planned for Terah to play, [God] got Abram to Canaan, so [God] could make His promises.

God has a plan for our lives, also. Sometimes we may not obey Him, but God already has that worked into the plan. He lets us have our own free will. But He already knows what we are going to decide. He's got that all written into the plan. His Will will be done. We have to have the faith to let Him work.

Abram may or may not have known Terah was moving the family to Canaan. [] Sometimes we have no idea where He is calling us to go or what He is calling us to do. We just know He is calling.

Sometimes we know the where and the what, we just can't see the how. There may be a learning curve or a location change. Many times, we can't see how we are going to get to where God wants us to be because of the obstacles we see in the way.

Bottom line - faith and obedience. They kind of go hand in hand. There is no need to be obedient if you don't have the faith that God's got this. The obedience alone won't get you anywhere because works won't get you to heaven (Titus 3: 5). You have to have *faith* to know God has everything planned out and is in control[, and *o]bedience* to follow His call and let Him work.

His Will will be done.

Even though Abraham's faith and obedience were not flawless, as this parashat makes plain, they were acceptable to God, especially when the acid test of sacrificing Isaac was administered as recorded in the next parashat. Thus we have hope that *our* imperfect faith and obedience will not disqualify us from the prize as long as we *persevere* in faithfulness and obedience to the death while we watch The LORD complete the good work He has begun in us.

The next parashat is *VaYera* which spans Genesis chapter 18 verse 1 through chapter 22 verse 24.