



## **Lekh Lekha**

November 5, 2022

*Torah:* Genesis 12:1-17:27  
*Haftarah:* Isaiah 40:27-41:16  
*K'tuvim Shlichim:* Romans 4:1-25

*Shabbat Shalom Mishpacha.* In our *parasha*, this week, ADONAI spoke to *Avram* and said: *Lekh lekha- 1* ..... “Get going out from your land, and from your relatives, and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you.” (Genesis 12:1b TLV). This call from ADONAI to *Avram* was the beginning of a faith which is today a family of faiths totaling more than 2.2 billion people. *4 So Abram went, just as Adonai had spoken to him.* (Genesis 12:4a TLV). Abram’s obedience to the voice of ADONAI gave birth to what we know today as the Judeo-Christian faith, a faith which grew from this one man to 15 million Jews and 2.2 billion Gentile followers of Yeshua. Both groups call Abraham “father.” It all started with the faith of this one man, *Avram*, an idol worshipper, a follower of false gods. But, he never heard his idols speak to him and when he heard ADONAI’s voice, *Avram* obeyed Him. He followed the same principle that we follow today when we declare the *Shema*.

When we declare the *Shema*, we follow the example of our father *Avraham*. *Shema* means hear but also implies action. Many people “hear G-d’s Word, but take no action. We understand that ADONAI has told us to “hear” His *Torah* because He has some action for us to carry out. If Abram had just heard and not acted, he would have remained in Haran and we would still be condemned by our sins. The same is true for us. If we just hear ADONAI’s word, we remain in our sins. But, because *Avram* obeyed ADONAI, we have been given the witness of Moses and the prophets and the witness of Yeshua and the gift of His sacrifice as payment for our sins. When we declare the *Shema* and take the action which it requires, we are following the example of our spiritual father, Abraham. We declare: *Shema Yisra’el, ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad*; Hear, O Israel, the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is one, and then are told: *5 “Love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”* (Deuteronomy 6:5 TLV). To love ADONAI requires action. How do we love Him in these ways? We love Him by worshipping Him, by honoring Him and by obeying His commands.

The *Shema* is followed by the *V’ahavta*, “and you shall.” In it we are told: *6 “These words, which I am commanding you today, are to be on your heart.”* (Deuteronomy 6:6 TLV). What does it mean for ADONAI’s words “to be on our heart?” These two verses tell us: *12 “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, 13 to keep the mitzvot of Adonai and His statutes that I am commanding you today, for your own good?”* (Deuteronomy 10:12-13 TLV). Each of the statements is a command to us. We are to: fear ADONAI, walk in His ways, love Him, serve Him and obey His commands. For what reason? He tells us why. It is for our own good. ADONAI’s Word is very clear. Faith without action is dead. Yeshua’s brother *Ya’acov* confirms it: *17 So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself. 18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.”*

*Show me your faith without works and I will show you faith by my works.* (James 2:17-18 TLV). It's like the old song by Doris Day: "Love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage. You can't have one without the other." Many don't realize it but both are required. Faith and works go together like love and marriage. At least, that's what our nation used to believe. Today, it's different. *Ya'acov* also told us about the royal law. What is the royal law? He said: *8 If, however, you fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well.* (James 2:8 TLV). In saying this, he was applying the principle of *remez* and pointing his readers back to Leviticus 19:16-18. Read it. The royal law is a command of ADONAI, the King. That's why it is the royal law. When we fulfill this law, we show that we don't follow a dead faith. It's not the "royal suggestion," but a command so important that we declare it every *Shabbat*.

*Avram* was born only 352 years after the flood. The people of that era's lives were much different than ours today because of the intertwining of multiple generations. *Avram's* birth was announced in *Parasha Noach* which we read last week: *27 These are Terah's genealogies: Terah fathered Abram, Nahor and Haran.* (Genesis 11:27 TLV). Noah was Abram's eighth grandfather. It is interesting to note that Noah's 950 year long life, a life which began 600 years before the flood, ended just 2 years before Abram was born. Abram almost knew his eighth grandfather. But, he did know his seventh grandfather, Shem who was alive during 150 years of Abram's life. After leaving Ur, Abram probably never saw his grandfather Shem again, but most likely would have known him during the 70 years he lived in Ur. Abram probably also knew his fifth grandfather Eber, a man whom ADONAI gave a long life and who outlived his grandson by four years. In our generations today, it is rare to even know a great grandparent, but it is becoming much more common with people living longer.

Another innovation of our generation today is the ease with which we get information. The *malakh Gavri'el*, the Angel Gabriel, proclaimed to Daniel: **<10>** *4 "But you, Daniel, close up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will run back and forth and knowledge will increase."* (Daniel 12:4 TLV). We know today that the book, The Book of Daniel, has been unsealed. It is the time of the end. And, we most definitely see the increase of knowledge in these end times. With the internet today, we can immediately access very much good information, knowledge, but also very much false information. A recent example is a report that was made that the Hassidic Jews had named and anointed one of their rabbis as the *Mashiach*. It is not true. This was a false report made to tickle people's ears. The Hasidic rabbis do honor this particular man as being a *yanukah*, a "boy wonder." He began to study *Torah* at age eight and today as a rabbi in his early thirties, he is greatly appreciated and honored as a teacher. It is true that this sect of Jews believes that the Messiah is now on the earth, a Jew who is living today. But, that the *Mashiach* had been proclaimed was false information, information spread by a Christian internet news group. You can't believe everything that you read or see on the internet, even by those who claim to be followers of Yeshua. It is our duty to be skeptics until we have searched out what we have read or seen and proven to our own satisfaction that such things are true. Never believe what you read or see on the internet without making every effort to verify it before telling it to someone else.

There is also false information out there about *Avram's* early years. There is the *midrashic* story that his father Terah was an idol maker and merchant in Ur. According to it, one day when Terah was on a journey and had left Abram in charge, Abram took a stick and broke all the small idols in the store. He placed the stick in the hand of the largest idol. When his father returned, he told him that the large idol broke all the others because they were hungry and started fighting among themselves. Terah said that idols don't get hungry,

angry or speak. They're just idols. Abram asked his father why if he knew this, did he worship them? That's a good story, but it's not true. Don't believe it. But, it is true that Abram and his family were pagans, worshippers of false gods. Scripture doesn't tell us this about Abram personally, but we do know that his father Terah worshipped other gods: 2 *Then Joshua said to all the people: "Thus says Adonai, God of Israel: 'From ancient times your fathers—Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor—lived beyond the River and worshipped other gods.'*" (Joshua 24:2 TLV). These kinds of stories, stories purported to be true, can tickle our ears, excite us to the possibility, a possibility which is often false.

In our *parasha* today, we read about Abram chasing Chedorlaomer who had taken his nephew Lot captive. After chasing them all the way beyond Damascus, he defeated them and brought back Lot. On the way south, the group stopped in the valley outside of Salem, the city that was later to become Jerusalem. The King of Salem, Melechizedek, came out to meet them. 18 *Then Melechizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine—he was a priest of El Elyon. 19 He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by El Elyon, Creator of heaven and earth, 20 and blessed be El Elyon, Who gave over your enemies into your hand."* Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. (Genesis 14: 18-20 TLV). This much, we do know. Melechizedek was a *kohen* of G-d Most High, El Elyon. That's all we know about him from Genesis. There is a *midrash* which states that Melechizedek was Shem, Abram's seventh grandfather. As we have seen, Shem was alive at that time, but what was he doing in Salem, a Jebusite city in Canaan? Abram didn't say: "Grandfather, it's so good to see you." This is all fantasy with no Scriptural evidence to support it whatsoever. The writer of Hebrews tells us this about Melechizedek: 3 *Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life but made like Ben-Elohim, he remains a kohen for all time.* (Hebrews 7:3 TLV). This means that ADONAI did not tell us who his parents were or when he was born or died. There is no question that this human being was a *kohen* of ADONAI, a very important *kohen* with an eternal priesthood. It may well be that ADONAI actually anointed him for his priesthood to be the symbol of an everlasting priesthood, like Ben Elohim, the type of priesthood to be given to Yeshua, Son of Elohim. Some say that Melechizedek was Yeshua. Don't you believe it. There is absolutely no Scriptural evidence of that. If he was Yeshua, the writer of Hebrews would not have said that Melechizedek had no father because it would have been a denial that Yeshua is the Son.

Both of these *midrashic* stories underscore the need for us to make sure that we separate the wheat from the chaff. Don't seek to have your ears tickled unless they are tickled by the truth. Judge what you read, see or hear *sola scriptura* only, that is, by Scripture alone. The book, *The Non-Torah: Exposing the Mythology of Divine Oral Torah*, a book authored by several of our IAMCS rabbis, debunks the myth of divine oral Torah, words supposedly equal in authority to the written Torah. A portion of the book's introduction says: "Is there such a thing as an "oral Torah" that was given by God to the Jews? Rabbinic Orthodox Judaism is founded on the mythological premise that Moses received not just a written Torah, but also an oral Torah from God at Sinai, which was supposedly passed on to future rabbinic leaders right up to today." What we believe and teach is very important. We cannot base it upon *midrashim* or tradition, but only upon the only Torah that we have, the written Torah. Torah, meaning teaching and instruction and including commands, has been expanded by ADONAI to encompass the entire Bible, Genesis to Revelation. We can only hang our hats on what is revealed therein; not on the internet, not in the *midrashim* and not in the *Talmuds*.

Genesis 11 tells us that Abram's father Terah took his family to Haran. After living in Haran five years, Terah died, and Abram, now seventy-five years old, left there for Canaan in response to ADONAI's call which we read a moment ago: 1 ..... "Get going out from your land, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you." (Genesis 12:1b TLV). Some 24 years later when Abram was 99 years old, Scripture says this: 6 Then he believed in Adonai and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:6 TLV). Following that declaration, ADONAI cut a covenant with him and one year later when Abraham was one hundred years old, the son of promise, Isaac, was born.

*Avram* believed ADONAI. The word translated as believed is *vehe'emin*, אָמַן. It is based upon the word *aman* from which we get amen and *amein*, which can be understood to mean, truly. Can we say that Abram's belief in ADONAI was faith in ADONAI? Is belief faith? Not exactly, but almost. They are intimately related. Easton's Bible Dictionary says: "Faith is in general the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true. The primary idea behind faith is trust." Nelson's Bible Dictionary defines faith "as a belief in or confident attitude toward G-d, involving commitment to his will for one's life and continues that belief is to place one's trust in G-d's truth." Putting these two definitions together, we can say that "trust" is faith and that "commitment to ADONAI's will for one's life" is also faith. So, even though the word faith was not mentioned in Genesis 15:6, we know that Abram had faith. But, guess what? The Hebrew word *emunah*, meaning "faith," is found in verse 6, at least a form of it. The word translated as "believed," *vehe'emin*, is also related to *emunah*, faith. *Aman and emun are words related to emin*. The verse says that "Abram believed" which also means that "Abram had faith in ADONAI." But, there is more to be found here. *Emunah*, meaning faith, also means faithfulness. Abram had it, and as followers of Yeshua, it is required of us as well.

Abraham, "father of a multitude," as we know him today, is our spiritual father. In Judaism, he is referred to as *Avraham avinu*, our father Abraham, not only because he was the physical father of the Jews, but also because he is our spiritual father. ADONAI said to him: 2 "My heart's desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing. 3 My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (Genesis 12:2-3 TLV). Both the physical and the spiritual are found in these verses. ADONAI has made Abraham's physical descendants into a great nation, but also through Abraham and his descendants, all the nations of the earth will be both physically and spiritually blessed. The nations of the earth have been physically blessed in so many ways by the Jews themselves; in science, medicine, art, music, theater and many other ways, not the least of which is the writing down of ADONAI's words, the Holy Scriptures. But, the greatest blessing is the spiritual blessing given through Abraham's seed, Yeshua. ADONAI said: ..and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. This blessing of all the nations of the earth is the gift of eternal life through Yeshua, life to those who believe as Abram did. We must *vehe'emin*, we must believe.

ADONAI said to Abram: "*Lekh Lekha*," "get going out" as it says in the TLV. These two words have been translated in several different ways. Another is "get yourself out," but I personally like "get up and go!" It's more to the point and imperative. ADONAI has also said "*Lekh Lekha*," "get up and go, to us. In the basic sense, we are to get up and go away from paganism. Before we trusted Yeshua, we were all pagans just like Abram. Yeshua said: 44 "No one can come to Me unless My Father who sent Me draws him—.." (John 6:44a TLV). ADONAI most certainly drew Abram. Making a *midrash* of Yeshua's statement, we could

restate it this way: “No one can *lekh lekha* to me, that is, get up and go out of paganism, unless My Father who sent me draws him...” The *Ruach ADONAI*, the Spirit of G-d, says to the unbelieving Jew and the unbelieving Gentile: *lech lecha*; “get up from where you are spiritually and come to Me.” ADONAI has said it and continues to say it to every person that He created! *Shimon Kefa* said: 9 “*The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some consider slowness. Rather, He is being patient toward you—not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance.*” (2Peter 3:9 TLV). All means all! ADONAI doesn’t choose some people and not others. Every person that ADONAI created has been drawn or is being drawn by His Spirit. No one has an excuse. His still, small voice speaks and is speaking to each of our hearts. Before a person trusts in Yeshua, he is a pagan, exactly as *Avram* was. Before Yeshua, we were idol worshippers, maybe not in the way that idols were worshipped in Abraham’s day, but idol worshippers, nevertheless. Rabbi Jonathan Cahn writes in *The Return Of The Gods* that the idol worshippers of today are those into sexual perversion and homosexuality and without knowing it, are worshipping the ancient gods, gods with a little “g,” the demonic entities promoted by *HaSatan*, and in particular, *Ba’al* and *Ashtoreth*. Those today who believe in and promote abortion are worshippers of *Molekh*, the demon god to whom children were sacrificed. And, a person who does not know Yeshua also worships himself, his own sense of righteousness and his own accomplishments, believing that he needs nothing else. But when such a person encounters and believes ADONAI in the person of Yeshua, it is credited to him as righteousness, just as it was for *Avram*. *Avram* obeyed, that is, trusted ADONAI, and ADONAI credited it to him as righteousness. The same is true today. Yeshua said: 28 “*Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*” (Matthew 11:28 TLV). When a person believes Yeshua, it is credited to him or her as righteousness and their name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Our spiritual burdens are taken by Yeshua and we have rest, *shalom*, in this life and we will have eternal *shalom* in the *olam haba*, the world to come.

Each of you, each of us, is very much like Abraham. We have had an encounter with Yeshua just as *Avram* did with ADONAI, and now are walking out the promise of salvation that we received by faith. Just as we are saved by faith in Yeshua, Abraham was also saved by faith. His name was also written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. *Sha’ul* said: 8 “*The Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the Good News to Abraham in advance, saying, “All the nations shall be blessed through you.”* (Galatians 3:8 TLV). Abraham heard the *Besorah*, the Good News, and trusted in his descendant Yeshua. Yeshua hinted at Abraham’s salvation when He said to the Judean leaders: 56 “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; he saw it and was thrilled.*” (John 8:56 TLV). Abraham saw Yeshua and His “Good News” of salvation coming in the future supernaturally. ADONAI showed it to him. And, He shows it to us if we listen to the soft, small voice of His *Ruach* who is drawing each and every one of us. If our own voice, the voice of our self, our mind, is louder, we can’t hear ADONAI drawing us to Yeshua. I personally believe that many more Jews would trust in Yeshua today if they would just stop and ask ADONAI the question: “Is Yeshua the Messiah?” And, then listen. Ask and you shall receive!

ADONAI said to *Avram*: 3 “*My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*” (Genesis 12:3 TLV). ADONAI blesses those who bless *Avram*’s descendants, the Jews, and He curses those who curse them. There are millions of people under the curse of ADONAI today. We read or hear in the news every day about someone cursing Abraham’s descendants and the land and nation which He gave them. But, it’s not too late for them to turn their curses into blessings. And, we pray that this will happen in the coming revival when many Muslims and people of

other false faiths turn to Yeshua. That time will also be an opportunity for the followers of Jesus who have also cursed Israel and the Jews to repent. It is unfortunate, but there are those even within Yeshua's own body today who have cursed Israel and the Jews.

ADONAI's plan for the salvation of the nations, the Gentiles, through His Son Yeshua was determined before the foundation of the earth. Before the foundation of the earth, ADONAI knew that your name had been written in the Lamb's Book of Life. *Sha'ul* explained it. Speaking of ADONAI, he said: *4 He chose us in the Messiah before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love. 5 He predestined us for adoption as sons through Messiah Yeshua, in keeping with the good pleasure of His will—..* (Ephesians 1:4-5 TLV). The decision that we would make in our own lives was known to ADONAI before the foundation of the world. ADONAI predestined us. That means that He knew in advance the name of each person who would choose Yeshua. We understand that. ADONAI doesn't choose some to be saved and some for damnation. He wants everyone to trust Yeshua. Did Abraham understand this? I believe he did. The answer may be in the phrase, "*and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*" The Hebrew word translated as blessed is *v'nivrechu*. But, it can also have another meaning. While we don't accept the *Talmud* as Scripture, we can learn from it. The Babylonian *Talmud*, Tractate *Sotah* 43, tells us that "*v'nivrechu* is derived from the Hebrew infinitive *mavrich*, which means "to graft." This means that the phrase could also be understood this way: "*and in you all the families of the earth will be grafted in.*" What this means is that by and through Abraham and his descendants, "all of the other families of the earth will be "grafted in," grafted into Israel. Almost four thousand years ago ADONAI gave Abraham a promise that through him the nations would be blessed and the blessing was to be grafted into the nation of Israel. And, Abraham most likely understood that this blessing to the nations was to be grafted into his family. This promise of blessing was to be later revealed as through his descendant Yeshua who would bring the *besorah*, the Good News, "the Gospel," to not only Abraham's descendants, but also to the nations. *Sha'ul* showed us how this would happen through his metaphor of the olive tree. (Romans 11). The Jewish olive tree sprouted from the roots of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Its branches are people, both Jews who have been re-grafted into their own tree and people from the nations who are newly grafted into the Jewish tree. I believe that Abraham did understand this.

And, then we have the question: "Why did ADONAI call *Avram*?" It was because of His great love for us, the creatures of His creation whom He made in His own image. But, His creation, mankind, turned away from ADONAI causing Him to destroy them with the flood. His love required restoration and He began it by calling Noah. And, then He chose *Avram*, Noah's great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandson, and all of his descendants to be the means that He would use to bring redemption to the world. Because of His great love for us, ADONAI gave *Avram*'s physical descendant Yeshua, His only begotten Son, to die on the stake as a means of redemption for our sins. *16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16 TLV). Scripture tells us that G-d is *echad*, one. This means that ADONAI, Yeshua and the *Ruach Kodesh* are *echad*, one, a compound unity, a single entity which is made up of more than one part. There is the Father and the Son and also the Spirit which emanates from both of them and they are *echad*, one. *Torah* never uses the word *yachid*, meaning "an absolute one," to refer to ADONAI. *Yachid* is used in Genesis 22 where ADONAI said to Abraham: *2 ... , "Take your son, your only son whom you love —Isaac—and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains about which I will tell you."* (Genesis 22:2b TLV). Even though Abraham was also the father of Ishmael, ADONAI

said that Isaac was his *yachid* son, his only son. Isaac is a foreshadowing of Yeshua who would actually be sacrificed near present day Mount Moriah. John 3:16 testifies to the greatness of the love that ADONAI has for mankind, for each and every one of us as individuals. It says: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. We have previously shown the relationship between the Greek word translated “only” in John 3:16 and *yachid* translated “only” in Genesis 22. They both mean an absolute “one,” the only one, *yachid* in Hebrew. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son who pictured Yeshua, but ADONAI actually did sacrifice his Son Yeshua. And, He did it because of His great love for us, His creatures. This began and came about through Abraham. Through him, ADONAI has blessed the Nations of the earth and made it possible for the Gentiles to be grafted into the holy nation, Israel, the nation which ADONAI called to be His *kohenim*, His priests to the Nations.

Twenty years ago, a body of believers was called out to do a new work called *Beit Shalom* Messianic Synagogue. At the time that we officially began, our small group was all Gentile. Through the years, Jews have joined us. Not very long after we began as a Messianic synagogue, we learned a new song and we took it as our theme song. It especially comes to our attention each year when we read *Parasha Lekh Lekha*. The song, *L’chi Lach*, written by Debbie Friedman and Savina Teubal, is the very embodiment of what our small group was called to do. The words of the song recall Genesis 12:1, where ADONAI said to *Avram*, “Get going out to the land I will show you.” (TLV). But, *L’chi Lach*, the words in the song, have a slightly different meaning than *lekh lekha*. They can be understood as saying “go into yourself.” In other words, find within yourself the journey which you are meant to have, your spiritual and also sometimes physical journey. In the early years of *Beit Shalom*, this was ADONAI’s spiritual message to a small group of Gentiles: “find within yourself, within your own spirit, where you are meant to go.” Each of us had already trusted Yeshua and was a part of His body at that time as a part of the Church, but now we were called to leave it and go to a place that we did not know. Everyone whom ADONAI has called to be a part of Messianic Judaism has done that. But, these words mean nothing if you don’t experience it for yourself, if it is not personal to you. Jews who have joined us have also left home and family for Yeshua, many times with angry words and separation from family. Making this commitment is not without cost. The words of the song, *L’chi lach, to a land that I will show you! Lech l’cha - to a place you do not know* are so very meaningful. Each of us has, both spiritually and physically, left home and family for Yeshua’s call into Messianic Judaism. Each year, when we read *Parasha Lech Lecha*, we are reminded of our calling. *Avraham aveinu*, Abraham our father, is our example. If our heart's desire is to serve Yeshua fully and completely, our witness will gradually become more and more like *Avraham aveinu* and our likeness gradually more and more like Yeshua, the One whom we are called to emulate. ADONAI, today, is calling others into Messianic Judaism, His end time ministry to the Jews. He is saying *lekh lekha* to both Jew and Gentile as we approach the time of Yeshua’s return. Abram was called by ADONAI at age 70, but he did not receive the son of promise, Isaac, until he was 100 years old, thirty years later. Abraham had *emunah*, faith, but he also had *emunah* in its meaning as faithfulness. He kept on keeping on. We are also in it for the long haul, whatever that may be. Our ministry theme, “Hear, Trust, Obey,” mirrors what Abraham did. Hear the *Ruach*, Trust in Yeshua, obey His commands. May we who have been called into Messianic Judaism for such a time as this, become even more faithful sons and daughters of *Avraham avinu*, our Father Abraham. *Shabbat shalom!*