



Parasha Vayera

November 12, 2022

Torah: Genesis 18:1-22:24

Haftarah: 2Kings 4:1-37

Ketuvim Sh'lichim: 2Peter 2:4-11

Shabbat-- Shalom Mishpocha! Our parasha today is Vayera meaning "And appeared," referring to ADONAI who appeared to Abraham. It begins: 1 Then Adonai appeared to him at Mamre's large trees while he was sitting in the entrance of his tent during the heat of the day. (Genesis 18:1 TLV). It is very interesting to me to know something about the location where events happen. The Hebrew says that the large trees were elon, oak trees. Traditionally, there has been a very large oak associated with this very site which only recently died, but has a small living sprout growing from its base. The oaks of Mamre where Abraham was living at this time was a mile or so north of Hebron, the location of the Cave of Machpelah which he later bought as a burial cave for Sarah. In Abraham's day, the sons of Heth, Canaanites, were living in Hebron. But, he bought the cave from Ephron, a Hittite, who lived among the Canaanites. In Abraham's day, there is no mention of the Anakim, the giants who were living there four hundred years later when Israel came in and conquered Canaan. Hebron was formerly known as Kiryat-Arba, the Town of Arba, named for Arba, a giant, one of the sons of Anak, the father of the Anakim.

Hebron, today, is in the so-called West Bank, with about 80% of it controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Israel controls 20%, which is enclosed in a chain-link fence to protect the Jews from the terrorists. The Cave of Machpela, the burial place of Abraham, Sara, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, is in the Arab section and is jointly administered by the Jews and the Arabs. Today, it is enclosed in a very large building and is unrecognizable as a cave. About 700 Jews live in the midst of 215,000 Arabs. There is an uneasy peace there with periodic violence against the Jews.

There are a number of separate sub-plots in the four chapters of Parasha Vayera. Each is very important in its own way and over the years we have studied them all. What we will focus on today is ADONAI's promise to Abraham. The parasha begins with ADONAI and two angels appearing at Abraham's camp. He offered his hospitality to ADONAI and after they had eaten, was asked: 9 ..., "Where is Sarah your wife?" "There, in the tent," he said. (Genesis 18: 9b TLV). Then ADONAI said to him: 10 ..., "I will most surely return to you in about a year's time, surprisingly, Sarah your wife will have a son." (Genesis 18:10b TLV). The surprise was because she was so old. This is the continuation of a promise which ADONAI gave Abram back in chapter 15. He had complained to ADONAI because he had no heir. 3 Then Abram said, "Look! You have given me no seed, so a house-born servant is my heir." 4 Then behold, the word of Adonai came to him saying, "This one will not be your heir, but in fact, one who will come from your own body will be your heir. (Genesis 15:3-4 TLV). Abram prepared animals and birds at ADONAI's direction. At dark, ADONAI passed through them as a flaming torch. 18 On that day Adonai cut a covenant with Abram, saying, "I give this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River: 19 the Kenite,

the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Raphaites, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.” (Genesis 15:18-21 TLV).

In chapter 16 we find that it is Sarai who is beginning to get a little nervous because she had not given Abram a child. We learned in Genesis 12:4 that he was about 75 years old when he came to Canaan. Sarai's unease led her to do something which she regretted later on. *3 So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her slave-girl Hagar the Egyptian—after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan—and gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife.* (Genesis 16:3 TLV). Abram was now 85 years old. From reading chapter 16 it appears that Hagar became almost immediately pregnant. Her son, Ishmael, was born when Abram was about 86 years old.

Then ADONAI appeared to Abram and made another covenant with him, an everlasting covenant, promising the land of Canaan as a permanent possession of his descendants. It is the Covenant of Circumcision and *b'rit milah*, circumcision, is its sign. *10 This is My covenant that you must keep between Me and you and your seed after you: all your males must be circumcised. 11 You must be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and this will become a sign of the covenant between Me and you.* (Genesis 17:10-11 TLV). Abram was promised that he would be the father of many nations and his name was changed from Avram, "exalted father," to Avraham, "father of many." Sarai's name was changed from Sarai, "my princess" to Sarah, "princess." Then Abraham circumcised himself and every male in his household. At this time he was 99 years old and Ishmael would have been about 13 years old.

ADONAI's

next appearance to Abraham is in Genesis 18, where our *parasha*, *Vayera*, begins. This was presumably just a short time after the circumcision as we see that Avraham is still 99 years old. After eating the meal Avraham prepared, ADONAI told him that He would return in about a year and Sarah would have a son (Genesis 18:10). At this time, she was 90 years old. Ninety year old women don't usually conceive and bear children. *Torah* says that *11 ... Sarah had stopped having the way of women,* (Genesis 18:11b TLV), which means that she was no longer ovulating and menstruating. No ovum was produced to be flushed out every cycle. In other words, her womb was dead. *12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I've grown decrepit (beloti), can I have desire—and my lord so old?"* (Genesis 18:12 TLV). She used the word *beloti*, בִּלְתִּי, meaning old or worn out. ADONAI knew she laughed and replied: *14 "Is anything too difficult for Adonai? At the appointed time I will return to you—in about a year—and Sarah will have a son."* (Genesis 18:14 TLV). Sarah's laugh indicated that she was skeptical. So was Abraham. When ADONAI changed his name to Avraham and was told that Sarah would have a son, he was even more incredulous: *17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to his heart, "Will a son be born to a 100-year-old man? Or will Sarah—who is 90 years old—give birth?"* (Genesis 17:17 TLV).

Shortly thereafter, ADONAI restored Sarah's dead womb. *1 Then Adonai visited Sarah just as He had said, and Adonai did for Sarah just as He had spoken.* (Genesis 21:1 TLV). Visited is the Hebrew *paqad*, פָּקַד, which can also mean "attended to." ADONAI restored Sarah's dead ovaries. *2 So Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time that God had told him. 3 Abraham named his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore for him—Isaac. 4 Then Abraham circumcised Isaac, his eight-day-old son, just as God had commanded him.* (Genesis 21:2-4 TLV). Abraham was 99 years old when Yitzchak, Isaac, was conceived and 100 years old when he was born. Ishmael would have been about 14 years old when Isaac was born.

We read a moment ago that ADONAI said to Abram: 4 ... *“one who will come from your own body will be your heir.”* (Genesis 15:4b TLV). But Sarai was impatient and gave Abram her slave girl as his wife, something that he readily agreed to, rather than waiting on ADONAI to perform it. Then, ADONAI revealed that the child of promise was to come from the body of 90 year old Sarah, a miraculous birth, because of Sarah's being past the age of childbearing. She was also past the age of childbearing earlier when she gave Hagar to Abram, about 75 years old at that time. And that's probably why she gave Hagar to Abram; she knew her own body, that it was incapable of producing a child. She didn't have faith in ADONAI to fulfill his promise. But ADONAI waited and waited and waited until she was even older, 15 years older, 90 years old, to reveal that He was going to do a miracle in her body.

As much faith as Abram had, he still made some bad decisions and exhibited lack of faith. One of his descendants, Isaiah, tells what each of us should do: 31 *but they who wait for Adonai will renew their strength. They will soar up with wings as eagles. They will run, and not grow weary. They will walk, and not be faint.* (Isaiah 40:31 TLV). Both Abram and Sarai should have waited on ADONAI. They would have avoided the pain that taking matters into their own hands brought them. Those two births, *Ishma'el* and *Yitzchak*, become symbols for us, and a warning that we should not try to do things in our own strength, but to "wait upon ADONAI."

People do not often learn from the mistakes of others. Many of the people of today have met Yeshua, many most likely with a very strong presence of the Holy Spirit, a very definite encounter with the living G-d. But many later turned away because of false teaching and their own desires. Our recent election clearly shows us that the United States is not a Christian nation. About one-half of the voters have voted for candidates who support abortion, homosexuality and transgender. Many of these profess to be followers of Jesus.

Sha'ul had a problem with those that he was teaching in Galatia. He said: 1 *O foolish Galatians, who cast a spell on you? Before your eyes Yeshua the Messiah was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2 I want to find out just one thing from you: did you receive the Ruach by deeds based on Torah, or by hearing based on trust? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Ruach, will you now reach the goal in the flesh?* (Galatians 3:1-3 TLV). They had received a powerful salvation through his teaching and witness earlier; a salvation by trust, faith in Yeshua's sacrificial death. But now, they were turning to some other "gospel," a gospel of the flesh. They turned away from the truth to untruth, a reliance on human effort rather than ADONAI's. Abram and Sarai did the same thing. *Sha'ul* had already said to the Galatians: 6 *I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from the One who called you by the grace of Messiah, to a different "good news"— 7 not that there is another, but only some who are confusing you and want to distort the Good News of Messiah.* (Galatians 1:6-7 TLV). What those people pestering the Galatians were selling was "the need to convert to Judaism," to become "proselytes" under the Jewish system in place at that time. *Sha'ul* had earlier given them the "real" Good News, salvation through faith in Yeshua was all they needed, but now they were turning toward trying to achieve their right-standing before G-d by submitting themselves to a human system. That's our problem today. People are turning away on their own, not to a religious system of worship today, but to their own system, rejecting ADONAI's truth for their own convenience and their own pleasure. 22 *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. 23 But one—the son by the slave woman—was born naturally; while the other—the son by the free woman—was through the promise.* (Galatians 4:22-23 TLV). Abram and Sarai tried to bring forth an heir

from the slave woman through their own efforts, but in the fullness of ADONAI's time, through His miraculous power, He brought forth an heir for Abraham through the free woman, Sarah. *Sha'ul* used this statement to make a *midrash* to explain the difference between righteousness through trusting faith in Yeshua and attempting to be made righteous through one's own efforts by *Torah* obedience. I am using these verses slightly differently, to emphasize that what we do must be under the direction of ADONAI rather than in our own power. He could have given Abram an heir when he first came into Canaan, but He didn't. He waited until it was humanly impossible for Sarah to have a son to reveal His miracle working power.

Isaac, the "son of promise," was born and grew into a man. *1 Now it was after these things that God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham." "Hineni," he said. 2 Then He said, "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 22:1-2 TLV). This was a test, a test of Abraham's faith. He had two sons, *Yishma'el* and *Yitzchak*. The meaning of the words, "Isaac, the son you love," was that Isaac was the son of promise, the son whose descendants would inherit the land which ADONAI promised to Abraham. Everything that had gone before also points to Abraham also loving Ishmael. He didn't want to, but sent him out into the wilderness because ADONAI commanded it.

Only son in this verse in Hebrew is *et-bincha et-yechidecha*, אֶת-בִּנְךָ אֶת-יְחִידְךָ. *Bincha* means "your son" and *yechidecha* means "only." *Et* is a pronoun which introduces both these words as a direct object. The root word of *yechidecha* is "*yachid*," meaning only, but more specifically, it means "alone," an absolute "one." The intent of this verse is that Isaac was Abraham's only son in respect to the promise. Last *Shabbat*, the difference between *yachid* and *echad* was briefly discussed. It is very important that we know how there is a difference, a difference clearly shown by ADONAI.

With regard to His own being, *YHVH*, יהוה, ADONAI never describes Himself as *yachid*, an absolute one. Any time His oneness is spoken of, it is always *echad*. In the *Shema* we read: *4 "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."* (Deuteronomy 6:4 TLV). One in this verse is *echad*, אֶחָד, which does mean one, but it is a compound one, a single entity which is made up of more than one part. In Genesis 2 it says: *23 Then the man said, "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh from my flesh. This one is called woman, for from man was taken this one." 24 This is why a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife; and they become one flesh.* (Genesis 2:23-24 TLV). One flesh, *basar echad*, בָּשָׂר אֶחָד, shows that the man and the woman, *Adam* and *Chava*, became a united one, *echad*, as married couples today do. Those who come together today without marriage violate ADONAI's command to marry before becoming intimate or procreating. When we speak of ADONAI as one, we know that He is One, but that His unity includes *HaAv*, the Father, *HaBen*, the Son and *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit.

Isaac was Abraham's *yachid* son, the son of the promise and the covenant. In this we also see Isaac as a type of Messiah, a foreshadowing of Yeshua. Yeshua is ADONAI's only begotten Son: *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). This verse emphasizes that Yeshua is "ADONAI's one and only Son," just as Isaac was Abraham's "only son." *Yachid* is translated as "only" in Hebrew, *yechidecha* in Genesis 22, but John 3:16 was written in Greek. In Greek, it says: *huios* (hwee-os') *tou* (toe) *monogenés* (mon-og-en-ace'), meaning, son, the only. *Monogenace*, only, is described as "pertaining to being the only one of its kind

or class, unique in kind.” Yeshua is ADONAI’s *monogenes* Son, His “only” Son. Isaac, Abraham’s *yachid* son was a foreshadowing of Yeshua, ADONAI’s *yachid* Son.

More than four thousand years ago, ADONAI tested Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his son Isaac. The Hebrew traditional name for this event is “the *Akedah*,” the binding of Isaac. Traditionally, it is connected with *Rosh Hashanah* because of the horn of the ram which became the sacrifice. *Pirkei Avot*, the Ethics of the Fathers, a part of the *Mishnah*, says that the left horn of the ram symbolizes the first *shofar* which was blown on Mount Sinai when the Israelites were standing before ADONAI to receive the *Torah* and the right horn symbolizes the last *shofar* which will be blown to herald the coming of the Messiah. Here are Scriptures about both of these events. 16 *In the morning of the third day, there was thundering and lightning, a thick cloud on the mountain, and the blast of an exceedingly loud shofar. All the people in the camp trembled.* (Exodus 19:16 TLV). Whether or not it really means that the ram’s left horn refers to this first *shofar*, it is true that it has happened and that the last *shofar* will also sound. We agree that the last *shofar* will announce the coming of the Messiah. *Sha’ul* said: 51 *“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed”* (1Corinthians 15:51-52 TLV). We are longing for that day!

ADONAI told Abraham to take his son Isaac to a place that he would show him and to sacrifice him there. He showed him a mountain where he was to build an altar. The place that Abraham built his altar was in the mountains of *Moriah*, about nineteen miles north of where Abraham lived at the oaks of *Moreh*. In Jewish tradition, *Har Moriah*, Mount Moriah, was the place where many years later, Solomon would build the Temple in the city of Jerusalem. When they reached the mountain, Abraham told his servants: 5 *.., “Sit yourselves down here with the donkey. As for me and the young man, we’ll go over there, worship and return to you.”* (Genesis 22:5b TLV). That Abraham told them that both he and Isaac would return to them is further evidence of his faith. Either, he didn’t believe that Isaac would die or that if he did die, he believed that ADONAI would raise him.

Abraham placed Isaac on the altar and bound him. No one knows how old Isaac was. Estimates range from 2 years old just after he was weaned to 37 years old. I believe that he was an adult, which showed that he, Isaac, like his father, had a great deal of faith. If Isaac had been a full-grown man, he would have had to willingly submit to being bound by his elderly father. In submitting to his father, Isaac again represented a type of Messiah in that he willingly opened himself to possible death, a foreshadowing of Yeshua’s sacrifice.

8 *Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself a lamb for a burnt offering, my son.”* (Genesis 22:8a TLV). A lamb for Himself means that ADONAI would provide the lamb for offering to Him. The burnt offering’s purpose was most likely the same as it was four hundred years later after ADONAI had given the *Torah*. (Leviticus chapter 1). The burnt offering signified seeking forgiveness for sin and making a complete surrender to G-d. By offering it, Abraham was showing that he was completely surrendered to G-d’s will, even if it meant offering the son for which he had waited so long. Abraham had prepared himself to do what ADONAI asked, sacrifice his son, but he fully expected something else to happen. The author of Hebrews said of Abraham: 19 *“He reasoned that God was able to raise him up even from the dead—and in a sense, he did receive him back from there.”* (Hebrews 11:19 TLV). In a sense, Isaac was already dead because he was under a death sentence. In Abraham’s mind,

Isaac was going to die, believing that was G-d's will, but he believed that G-d would raise him from the dead. As it turned out, Abraham's faith spared him from making the sacrifice. As Abraham raised his hand with the knife, the angel of ADONAI stopped him, satisfied that he would have carried out the sacrifice.

14 Abraham named that place, Adonai Yireh,—as it is said today, “On the mountain, Adonai will provide.” (Genesis 22:14 TLV). ADONAI Yireh, אֱלֹהֵי יִרְאֵה, is translated as “ADONAI provides,” and the provision of a ram was just one example of His provision. Abraham knew ADONAI as *El Shaddai*, the all sufficient one, his provider. It is written as YHVH here in the *Torah*, but He was not known at that time by that name. Since the time that Moses met Him at the burning bush and He revealed His name, YHVH, יְהוָה, we have known Him as ADONAI.

ADONAI Yireh can also be rendered as “ADONAI will see,” another important understanding about this event. *Yireh* comes from the verb *lirot*, לִרְאוֹת, which means to see, to perceive, to look. Its root is also used to describe a seer, a prophet, someone who can see things that others cannot. ADONAI sees the past, present and future all at the same time as described by the word omniscient. What did He see? This verse hints at something which happens in the distant future. Another reason that ADONAI commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac may have been to present him as a picture of what would happen in the future. Isaac, Abraham's *yachid* son, was a foreshadowing of Yeshua who would be sacrificed for our sins, ADONAI's *yachid* Son. ADONAI Yireh, ADONAI, saw the perfect sacrifice, His Son, Yeshua the Messiah, who willingly laid down his life for his people and ultimately for the whole world? Then, ADONAI said to Abraham: 18 “In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed—because you obeyed My voice.” (Genesis 22:18 TLV). Genesis 22 is a prophetic picture of what was to come through Abraham's, Isaac's and Jacob's seed, and ultimately, his seed Yeshua, the salvation of Israel. Isaac and Yeshua were alike in several ways. Both were “long-awaited sons” born in miraculous circumstances. Both sons carried the wood on their backs on the way to their sacrifice, Isaac the firewood for the offering and Yeshua, the crossbar, which would support His body on the stake. Both fathers led their sons to the sacrifice and the sons followed obediently followed their fathers toward their death. ADONAI provided the lamb in place of Isaac and provided Yeshua, the “lamb that was slain for the sins of the world.” (John 1:29). Both Abraham and Isaac are pictures of ADONAI's tremendous love. Abraham willingly prepared to offer his only son and Isaac was a willing sacrifice. Together, they are a picture of ADONAI who willingly gave His *yachid* Son Yeshua, and a picture of Yeshua, who willingly gave His life as a sacrifice for sin.

2Peter 2 refers to this *parasha*. Speaking of ADONAI, it says: 6 *He devastated the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, reducing them to ashes—making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.* 7 *He rescued Lot, a righteous man deeply troubled by the shameless immorality of the wicked.* 8 *(For that righteous man, while living among them, was tormented in his righteous soul day after day by lawless deeds he saw and heard.)* 9 *Therefore the Lord certainly knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and how to keep the unrighteous being punished until the Day of Judgment—* 10 *especially those who follow after the flesh in its unclean desires and who despise the Lord's authority. Brazen and arrogant, these people do not tremble while slandering glorious beings;..* (2Peter 2:6-10). Sodom and Gomorrah are pictures of our world's sinful state today. Judgment is coming for those who do not repent and turn away from their sins. Today, the United States is very much like Capernaum during Yeshua's ministry there. He lived there and taught there. Referring to it, He said: 23 “*And you, Capernaum? Will you be lifted up to heaven? No, you will go down to Sheol! For if the*

miracles done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.” (Matthew 11:23 TLV). Capernaum did not repent and bore the consequences, but the people of the United States still have a chance to turn around. Time is getting short. Repentance is urgent now!

We all have faults. Abraham had them. He didn't always do the best thing. Nevertheless, we should all strive to have the faith of Abraham. We are taught: *17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Messiah.* (Romans 10:17 TLV). Our faith is strengthened when we hear Yeshua's words of teaching and encouragement and for that reason, we must constantly be students. But our faith is also strengthened through the examples of faithful ones like *Avraham* and *Elisha*. In our *haftarah* today, *Elisha* not only prayed that the woman of *Shunam* would conceive a son and she did, but also raised her son from the dead. The child had been dead for some hours when *Elisha: 35 ... stepped down and walked in the house to and fro, and then he got up on the bed and stretched himself on him. The child sneezed seven times, then the child opened his eyes. 36 He then called Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite.” So he called her. When she came in to him, he said, “Pick up your son.”* (2Kings 4:35b-36 TLV). The child was restored to life. We also have the example of the miraculous birth of *Yochanan* whose mother *Elisheva* was barren and old. The angel *Gavri'el* said to *Miryam: 36 Behold, even your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son in her old age; and the one who was called barren is six months pregnant. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.”* (Luke 1:36-37 TLV). I believe that the faithful remnant of this generation will see these kinds of things happen. Yeshua said to his disciples when He sent them out: *7 “As you go, proclaim, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near!’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with tza'arat, drive out demons. Freely you received, freely give.”* (Matthew 10:7-8 TLV). A day is coming when these things will happen among Yeshua's faithful followers. For it to happen, our faith must continue to grow and it will as we fully commit ourselves to serve Him. More and more backsliders will make *teshuvah* and return to ADONAI's grace. That ADONAI called Abraham and used him to bring forth a people from whom would come Yeshua, our Messiah is the reason that all of us, Jew and Gentile who have trusted in Him are now awaiting His return. It is near. Pray for the coming revival that we see in Scripture, a time when ten Gentiles will grab the *tzitzit* of a Jew, a Messianic Jew, and say “I want to go with you because I know that G-d is with you. (Zechariah 8). Pray that it will happen soon and that the Godlessness of many in the world today will become Godliness with many being saved from their fallen state. May our fallen nation become a shining star of faith and faithfulness in Yeshua. *Shabbat shalom!*