

LECH LECHA (*get yourself out*)



Abraham leaving Ur of the Chaldees by William Hole

Question: Where did Abram grow up? Abram grew up in Ur of the Chaldeans, an important city in the ancient world. Archaeologists have discovered evidence of a flourishing civilization there in Abram's day. The city carried on an extensive trade with its neighbors and had a vast library.

Question: What happened to Abraham between Genesis chapter 11 and chapter 12? Jasher 12: The first 10 years of Abram's life he spent in a cave to escape the wrath of King Nimrod. Then he went to live with Noah and Shem. When Abram was 50 years old he went back to his father's house. Terah his father was captain of the host of King Nimrod, and he followed strange gods.

When Abram came to his father's house and saw twelve gods standing there in their temples, the anger of Abram was kindled and he took a hatchet in his hand, and came unto the chamber of the gods, and he broke all his father's gods. When King Nimrod heard of what Abram had done, he put him in prison for 10 days until he decided what to do with him. King Nimrod prepared a fire for three days and three nights in the king's furnace, that is in Casdim; and the king ordered them to take Abram from prison and bring him out to be burned. King Nimrod had asked Abram's father to slay him, but he didn't. Instead he hid him in a cave for 10 years. King Nimrod asked Terah, "Who advised you to do this?" Terah was terrified in the king's presence, and he said to the king, It was Haran my eldest son who advised me to this; and Haran was 32 years old. But Haran did not advise his father to do anything. The king said to Terah, "Haran, who advised you to do this will die through fire with Abram; for the sentence of death is upon him for having rebelled against the king's desire in doing this thing." They brought them both, Abram and Haran his brother, to cast them into the fire; and all the inhabitants of the land and the king's servants and princes and all the women and little ones were there, standing that day over them. The king's servants took Abram and his brother, and they stripped them of all their clothes except their lower garments which were upon them. They bound their hands and feet with linen cords, and the servants of the king lifted them up and cast them both into the furnace. יהוה loved Abram and had compassion over him, and יהוה came down and delivered Abram from the fire and he was not burned.

Haran died when they had cast him into the fire, and he was burned to ashes, for his heart was not perfect with יהוה; and those men who cast him into the fire, the flame of the fire spread over them, and they were burned, and twelve men died. Abram walked in the midst of the fire three days and three nights, and all the servants of the king saw him walking in the fire, and they came and told the king. The king ordered Abram to be taken out from the fire; and his servants approached to take him out and they could not, and the flames came upon them and burned their faces so that eight of them died. The king told Abram to come out of the fire, but Haran the brother of Abram was burned to ashes. Haran was eighty-two years old when he died in the fire of Casdim. And the king, princes, and inhabitants of the land, seeing that Abram was delivered from the fire, they came and bowed down to Abram. Abram said to them, "Do not bow down to me, but bow down to the God of the world who made you, and serve him, and go in his ways for it is he who delivered me from out of this fire". The king gave Abram many presents and he gave him his two head servants from the king's house; the name of one was Oni and the name of the other was Eliezer. All the kings, princes and servants gave Abram many gifts of silver and gold and pearl, and the king and his princes sent him away, and about three hundred men joined him. Abram went back to his father's house. Nimrod secretly planned to kill Abram, but Eliezer told Abram of this plot to kill him. Abraham returned to Noah's house where he was concealed for one month. Terah came to see Abram secretly and decided to leave the country with Abram. Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, the wife of his son Abram, and all his household and went from Ur Casdim to go to the land of Canaan. When they came as far as the land of Haran they remained there, for it was exceedingly good land for pasture. Abram remained in the land three years.



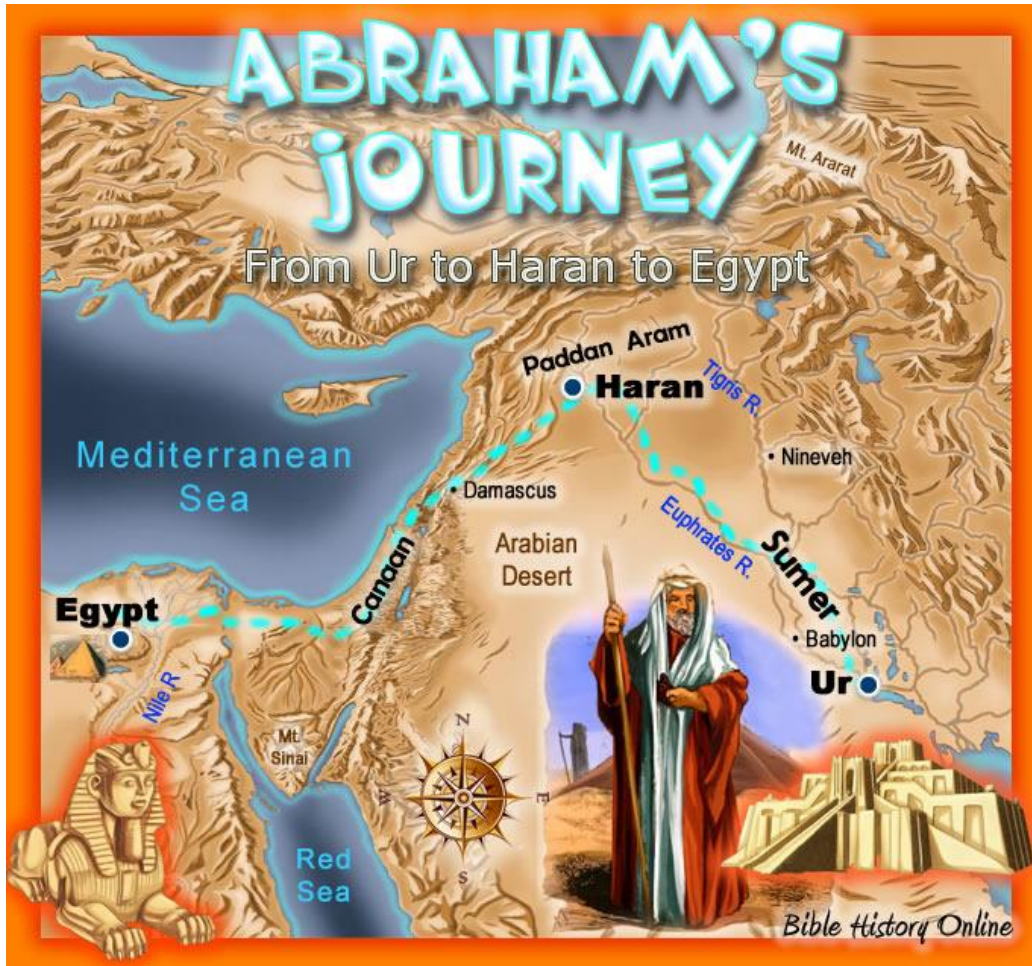
Abram, Sarai, and Lot traveled from Ur of the Chaldeans to *Canaan* by way of *Haran*. Though indirect, this route followed the rivers rather than attempting to cross the vast desert. At יהוה's command, Abram, his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot traveled to Canaan.



Abram's Journey from Ur to Canaan



Abraham's Journey from Ur to Canaan

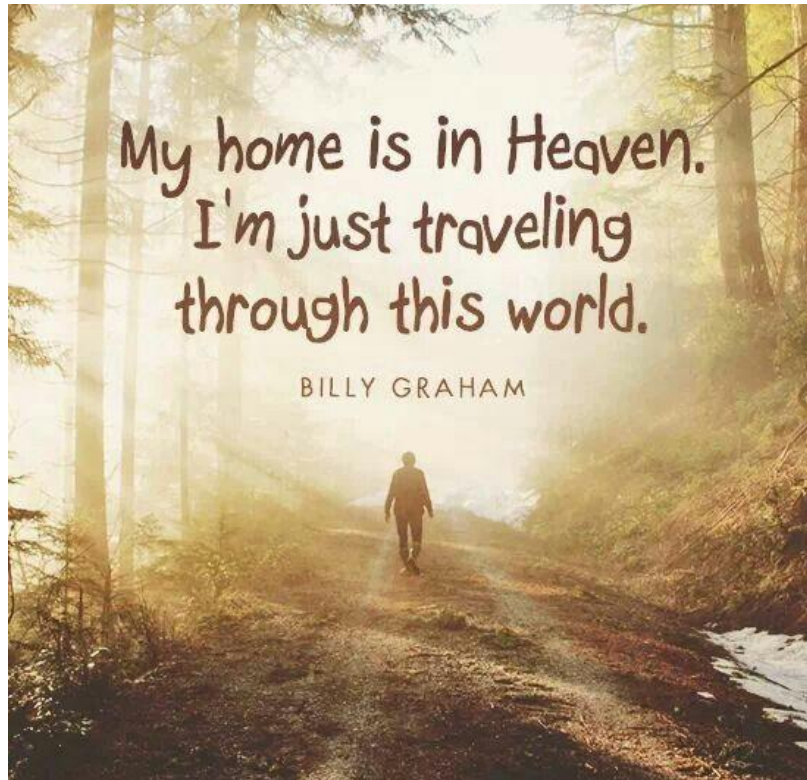


Genesis 12:1 Now יהוה had said to Abram, Get out of your country and away from your kinsmen and from your father's house to a land that I will show you: C-MATS

Question: What change took place through Abraham? After twenty generations of failure, the privilege of being יהוה's Chosen People was earned by Abraham and his offspring. Abraham did not win his new status by default; he had to prove his greatness by passing ten tests of faith (Avos 5:4). *Chumash*

Question: What was Abraham's **first test of faith**? The first trial mentioned in Scripture is the command that Abraham would give up his entire past and follow יהוה's lead to a new land. The Torah expresses Abraham's test in ascending degrees of difficulty. It is hard for someone to leave his homeland, even harder to leave his extended family, and hardest of all to leave his parents (Ramban). Abraham and Sarah severed all ties with their past and loved ones -- when they were 75 and 65 years old. *Chumash*

Question: Did יהוה tell him where he was going? יהוה did not reveal the land to Abram immediately, but יהוה showed Abram the land only after he had been obedient and followed His commands and arrived in the land. יהוה enabled him to be rewarded for every step he took in faith. *Chumash*



Question: What is a Heavenly test? A Heavenly test is one that forces a person to choose between יהוה's will and his own nature or understanding of what is right. Clearly, it would be no challenge to Abraham, who was the epitome of kindness, to be asked to help the needy, but it would be a supreme test of faith for him to desert his aged father and homeland or to give his cherished, beloved son as an offering [Genesis 22]. Thus, Abraham was tested by being forced to make secondary his wishes and wisdom to what יהוה desired for him to do. By doing so, he demonstrated his conviction that man's highest goal is to accept the Divine wisdom as the only truth. *Chumash*

Question: Since יהוה knows all future events and how every person will respond to any given situation, why was it necessary to test Abraham? Of course the outcome is never in doubt to יהוה, for He knows that the person being tested will persevere. To the contrary, a just יהוה does not impose trials that are beyond the capacity of the individual - יהוה tests only righteous people who will do His will, not the wicked who will disobey. Thus, all the Torah's trials are for the benefit of those being tested. But that is known only to יהוה. The person being tested has free choice, and he must find the strength and wisdom to choose correctly. If he does, then he has translated his potential into action and made himself a greater person, for actual deed far outweighs mere potential in the Heavenly scales of judgment, and he can therefore be rewarded for what he did, rather than for what he was merely capable of doing.

Genesis 12:2 I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing: C-MATS

Question: What were Abraham's concerns about traveling to a new land? יהוה assured Abraham that he would not suffer the three detrimental consequences commonly resulting from extended travel: Its rigors make it harder to bear children [which must have been of particular concern to the childless Abraham and Sarah], they diminish one's wealth, and they harm one's reputation. In this verse, יהוה told him that he would not suffer in any of these ways (Rashi). *Chumash*

Spiritual Exercise: Are you letting the comfort and security of your present position make you miss יהוה's plan for you? Does יהוה want you to leave your job, house, or country? Yield to His spirit and He will bless you. He knows what is best for you.

Genesis 12:3 I will bless them that bless you and curse him that curses you: and in you will all families of the earth be blessed. (Prophecy Fulfilled-Gen. 12:3 As Abraham's seed, will bless all nations-Matthew 8:5, 10; Acts. 3:25, 26.) 4 So Abram departed as יהוה had spoken to him; and Lot went אִתּוֹ with him: and Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran. C-MATS

Question: Why did Abraham take Lot with him? Lot's father was Haran, Abraham's brother, who had died in the flames of Ur Kasdim from the punishment of Nimrod after he chose Abraham over Nimrod. Abraham then undertook the responsibility of raising the orphaned Lot. Some say that יהוה had not asked Abraham to take Lot with him and that Lot's later behavior showed that he should not have done so. *Chumash*

Genesis 12:5 And took Abram אֶת־ Sarai, אִשְׁתּוֹ his wife אֶת־ and Lot, his brother's son אֶת־ and all their possessions that they had gathered אֶת־ and the people (souls) that they had gotten in Haran; and they left to go into the land of Canaan C-MATS

Question: What is significant about verse 5? The first time we see אֶת in front of Sarai is when she departs with Abram from Ur. Abraham and Sarah are the father and mother of the one true faith for those who seek to follow righteousness according to Isaiah 51:2 **Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah that bore you; for when he was but one I called him and I blessed him and made him many. C-MATS**

Question: Did Abraham and Sarah have other believers with them? Though Abraham and Sarah had many disciples, they were essentially alone; they could never blend into whatever culture surrounded them. Abraham was called an Ivri, the other side. Literally this means that he came to Canaan from the other side of the Euphrates, but we could interpret the title in a deeper sense, too. He was on one side of a moral and spiritual divide, and the rest of the world was on the other. Righteous people must be ready to endure such isolation; popularity is pleasant but it is also a snare, because the natural desire to win the approval of others can easily lead people to bend their principles. Abraham and Sarah were now given the challenge of moving to the other side -- not only of their native river, but of anyone who preferred not to acknowledge the sovereignty of יהוה.

Genesis 12:6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Sichem, to the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanites *were* then in the land.

Question: Why does scripture point out that “the Canaanites *were* then in the land”? The Canaanites gradually conquered the Land of Israel from the descendants of Shem. Canaan took Shem’s share of land that Noah had apportioned to his sons. And יהוה said to Abram: For **את** all the land which **אתה** you see, I give it to you and to your seed forever. (The seed is the descendants of Shem.) Genesis 13:15 *Chumash*



Genesis 12:7 יהוה appeared to Abram and said, To your seed (*descendants*) **אתן** will I give **האזאת** this **את** land: and Abram built there an altar to ליהוה, who appeared to him. (*Prophecy Fulfilled-Gen. 12:7 The Promise made to Abraham's Seed-Gal. 3:16*). C-MATS

Question: What does it mean that יהוה appeared to Abram? יהוה is not physical, so this means by which He "speaks" and makes Himself "visible" to people is an eternal mystery. Nevertheless, the Torah tells us that He appeared in a way that was tangible to Abraham (R' Hirsch). In gratitude for the promise of children and the Land, Abraham built an altar to יהוה (Rashi). *Chumash*

Question: “I give **האזאת** this **את** land” Who does the Land belong to? The land promised to Abram belongs to יהוה and the covenant with the land is made through **את**. C-MATS

Genesis 12:8 And he left there to go to a mountain on the east of Bethel (*house of El, G-d*) and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west and Hai (*a ruin*) on the east: and there he built an altar to ליהוה and called upon the name of יהוה. C-MATS

Question: Why did Abraham build an altar in this specific place? He prayed for those who would fight for the Promised Land at Hai, the first place conquered by Joshua. This was where the future house of יהוה would be built. *Chumash*



Abraham builds an altar

Question: What is a fundamental principle that you must look for as you read about the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob)? Whatever the Patriarchs do and wherever they stop and make an altar or dig a well is a sign for their children. Whenever a prophecy is clothed in a symbolic act by one of the Patriarchs, the decree becomes permanent and unalterable. The Torah relates at length such incidents as their journeys, digging of wells, making altars, etc., because they serve as lessons for the future. Abraham's stopover in Shechem -- in addition to his prayers for Jacob's sons who would one day fight against Shechem -- was a sign that Shechem would be the first place to be conquered by the Israelites, nearly 300 years before Israel gained full possession of the land. **Genesis 34:25 And it came to pass on the third day when they were sore that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took his sword and came upon the city (Shechem) boldly and killed all the males. Chumash**

Genesis 12:9 Abram journeyed continuing on toward the south. 10 There was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to live there, for the famine was severe in the land. C-MATS

Question: What was Abraham's **second test of faith**? Immediately after he settled in the new homeland where יהוה had promised him every manner of blessing, there was a famine, whereupon יהוה commanded him to leave the land and move to Egypt. In view of Sarah's great beauty, this test was especially difficult because the Egyptians were notorious for their immorality. Now Abraham and Sarah would be at the mercy of the Egyptians, who might lust after her and kill him (Abarbanel). Knowing that he and Sarah would be in grave danger in Egypt if they came as man and wife, Abraham made up the claim that she was his sister. Though Abraham thought that this deception would protect Sarah as well as him, it was a "great sin" for him to put her in danger. *Chumash*



Abram continues his journey

Question: How did the sin of lying effect Abram? Lying compounds the effects of sin. When he lied, Abram's problems multiplied. Instead of believing that יהוה could protect him, he devised his own plan to protect himself and Sarai. *Chumash*

Genesis 12:11 And it came to pass, when he came close to entering Egypt that he said to Sarai, אשתו *his wife*, I know that *you are* a fair woman to look upon את (you?)*. **12** When the Egyptians see אתה *you* they will say, זאת *this is* אשתו *his wife*: and they will kill אתי *me*, but they will keep ואתך *you* alive. **13** Say you, I pray, that are אחתי *my sister* את (you?)*, so that it may be well with me for your sake; and my soul will live because of you. C-MATS

Question: What was Abraham's plan? Abraham thought that if the nobles of Egypt were to shower him with gifts to win his "sister's" hand, the masses would be afraid to harm him, and Sarah's safety would be assured (Gur Aryeh). But his plan did not succeed, for Sarah's exceptional beauty brought about a different turn of events (Ran). *Chumash*

Genesis 12:14 And it came to pass, when Abram came into Egypt, beheld (*saw*) the Egyptians את *the woman* was very fair. C-MATS



Abram counsels Sarai

Question: Where did the Egyptians find Sarai? It teaches us that Abram hid Sarai in a trunk, and when they demanded the customs duty, they opened it and saw her.
Chumash



Egyptian princes admire her



Genesis 12:15 And saw **אתה** *her*, the princes of Pharaoh and praising **אתה** *her* to Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. 16 And Pharaoh treated Abram well for her sake: giving him sheep, oxen, male donkeys, menservants, female servants, she donkeys and camels. 17 And plagued **יהוה את-י** Pharaoh *with* great plagues **את-** *and* his house, because of Sarai, Abram's **אשת** *wife*. C-MATS

Question: What was Abram's **third test of faith**? Sarai was taken into Pharaoh's house and Abram had to trust **יהוה** to take care of her while she was in his house. *Chumash*

Question: What plague did **יהוה** bring to Pharaoh and his household? **יהוה** brought a debilitating skin disease that made sexual contact impossible, thus assuring that Sarah's chastity would be safeguarded (Rashi; Gur Aryeh). The verse mentions that she was the wife of Abraham because it was to his advantage, too, that **יהוה** punished Pharaoh (Ramban). *Chumash*

Genesis 12:18 Pharaoh called Abram and said, What **זאת** *this* you have done to me? Why didn't you tell me that she was **אשתך** *your wife*? 19 Why **דמרת** *you say*, she *is* my sister, so I might have taken **אתה** *her* to me *for my wife*? Now here is **אשתך** *your wife*, take *her* and go your way. C-MATS

Question: What did Pharaoh tell Abram to do once he found out that Sarai was his wife? Pharaoh said to him, "**take her and go your way**, because the Egyptians are lustful". Not like Abimelech, who said to him: "My land *is* before you: live wherever it pleases you to live." Genesis 20:15 *Chumash*

Genesis 12:20 Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him: and they sent away **אתו** *with* **אתה** *him* **את-** *and* **אשתו** *his wife* **את-** *and* all that he had. (*there are 47 **את** translated suspiciously as "you?" throughout the Tanakh). Genesis 13:1 And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife and Lot and all that he had into the south. 2 And Abram *was* very rich in cattle and in silver and in gold. C-MATS

Question: Why did Abram choose to raise cattle? In Abram's day, sheep and cattle owners could acquire great wealth. Abram's wealth not only included silver and gold, but also livestock. These animals were a valuable commodity used for food, clothing, tent material, and sacrifices. They were often traded for other goods and services. Abram was able to watch his wealth grow and multiply daily. *Chumash*

Genesis 13:3 And he went on his journey from the south to Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai. **4** To the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: where Abram called on the name of יהוה. C-MATS

Question: When Abraham returned from Egypt where did he go? Abraham returned to the altar where he had declared his devotion when he first arrived in the Land –where the future house of יהוה would be built. *Chumash*

Genesis 13:5 And Lot went **אתו** with Abram and he had flocks and herds and tents. C-MATS

Question: How did Lot get his wealth? He was going with Abram and יהוה blessed him. (You are blessed when you associate yourself with righteous men.) *Chumash*

Genesis 13:6 And the land was not able to support **אתם** them so that they could live together. Their possessions were great, so that they could not live together in the same place. **7** And there were arguments between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: where the Canaanite and the Perizzite lived in the land. **8** Abram said to Lot, Let there be no more arguments, please, between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, *for we are brothers*. **9** Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself, please, from me: if *you want* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *you go to* the right hand, then I will go to the left. C-MATS



Question: How does Abram show us how to settle arguments? Abram took the initiative in settling the dispute. He gave Lot first choice, even though Abram, being older, had the right to choose first. Abram also showed a willingness to risk being cheated. Abram's example shows us how to respond to difficult family situations: (1) Take the initiative in resolving conflicts; (2) let others have first choice, even if that means not getting what we want; (3) put family peace above personal desires.

Question: What happened in time as a result from these arguments? In time the rift between their descendants would become so absolute and irreversible that Lot's male descendants from Ammon and Moab would be prohibited from entering the congregation of Israel.

Question: Do you think a person will be happier if he fights hard to make sure he always get his way, or if he gives in sometimes for the sake of maintaining peace with those around him? The first way sounds good at first glance - after all, he always gets his way. However, a person who is constantly at odds with those around him will always feel tense and on red-alert for his next battle. A person who makes peace his primary value, compromising and giving in, when able, will feel much more calm and accepting of life.

Question: Is there ever a time when one should fight for what he wants rather than compromise? Compromise and peacemaking is usually the best path. However, if it is a matter of compromising one's belief in יהוה and his laws, one should be willing to take it to the limit and not give in.



Lot chooses his land

Genesis 13:10 And lifted up Lot **את** his eyes and beheld **את** all the plain of the Jordan, that *it was* well watered everywhere, before destroyed יהוה **את** Sodom **ואת** and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of יהוה, like the land of Egypt as you come to Zoar. 11 Then chose Lot **את** all the plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves from each other. C-MATS

Question: What happened when Lot separated himself from Abram? Lot distanced himself from Abram and also from יהוה. *Chumash*

Question: What influenced Lot's decision? Lot's character is revealed by his choices. He took the best share of the land even though it meant living near Sodom, a city known for its sin. He was greedy, wanting the best for himself, without thinking about his uncle Abram's needs or what was fair. Life presents a series of choices. We, too, can choose the best while ignoring the needs and feelings of others. But this kind of choice, as Lot's life shows, leads to problems. When we stop making choices in **יהוה**'s direction, our only option is to make choices in the wrong direction. Are you making choices based on greed and what you want to do or making choices based on what **יהוה** wants you to do?

Genesis 13:12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan and Lot lived in the cities on the plain, and Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom. C-MATS

Spiritual Exercise: Good pasture and available water seemed like a wise choice to Lot at first. But he failed to recognize that wicked Sodom could provide temptations strong enough to destroy his family. Have you chosen to live or work in a "Sodom"? Even though you may be strong enough to resist the temptations, other members of your family may not. While **יהוה** commands us to reach people in the "Sodom" near us, we must be careful not to become like the very people we are trying to reach. Have you become influenced by the people around you or have you influenced the people around you to do good things?



Question: Where is this region today? That area became the desolate and inhospitable Dead Sea region of today even though at one time it was as lush as the Garden of Eden. The Dead Sea may be the most unusual lake in the world. It is so salty that a swimmer can lie on the surface of the water. The surface and shoreline is **the lowest depression on earth**, 1,300 feet below sea level. The depth of the lake is 1,300 feet below that. This lake is the end of the line for the water of the Jordan River, with no outlet. The Jordan River pours 6.5 million tons of water daily into the Dead Sea. The aftermath of the judgment of Sodom is the lowest place on earth! Apparently this is a sign to us to turn from the wickedness of this world and escape His judgment.

Genesis 13:13 But the men of Sodom *were* exceedingly wicked and sinners to ליהוה. 14 And ויהוה said to Abram, Now that Lot was separated from you, lift up your eyes and look from the place where אתה *you* are, northward and southward and eastward and westward: 15 For אתה *you* see, I give it to you and to your seed forever. 16 And I will make אתה *your* seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number אתה *the* dust of the earth, *then* your seed can also be numbered.

Question: What does it mean “I will make אתה *your* seed as the dust of the earth”? It is את *seed* in Abram that is promised to be multiplied as the את *dust* of the earth. Signifying יהוה through את *is* the one doing the multiplying. C-MATS

Genesis 13:17 Arise, walk through the land in the length and width of it, because I will give it to you. C-MATS

Question: How would Abram set the boundaries of the land that יהוה was giving him? Abram was commanded to walk through the land in the length of it and in the width of it. Everywhere Abram put his feet the land belonged to him. *Chumash*

Genesis 13:18 Then Abram removed his tent and came and lived in the plain of Mamre, which *is* in Hebron and built there an altar to יהוה. C-MATS



Abraham's Oak, Near Hebron

Genesis 14:1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of nations; 2 *That these kings made war אֶת־ with Bera King of Sodom, אֶת־ and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.* 3 All these were joined together in the valley of Siddim, which is the salt sea. 4 Twelve years they served אֶת־ Chedorlaomer and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 And when the fourteenth year came, Chedorlaomer and the kings that were אִתּוֹ with him attacked אֶת־ the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim אֶת־ and the Zuzims in Ham אֶת־ and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 אֶת־ And the Horites in their mountain Seir, to El-paran, which is by the wilderness. 7 And they returned and came to En-mishpat, which is Kodesh and attacked אֶת־ all the country of the Amalekites and also אֶת־, the Amorites that lived in Hazezon-tamar. 8 And the King of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (the same as Zoar) went out and they joined battle אִתָּם with them in the valley of Siddim; 9 With אֶת־ Chedorlaomer the king of Elam and with Tidal king of nations and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against אֶת־ five. 10 And the valley of Siddim was full of clay pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. C-MATS

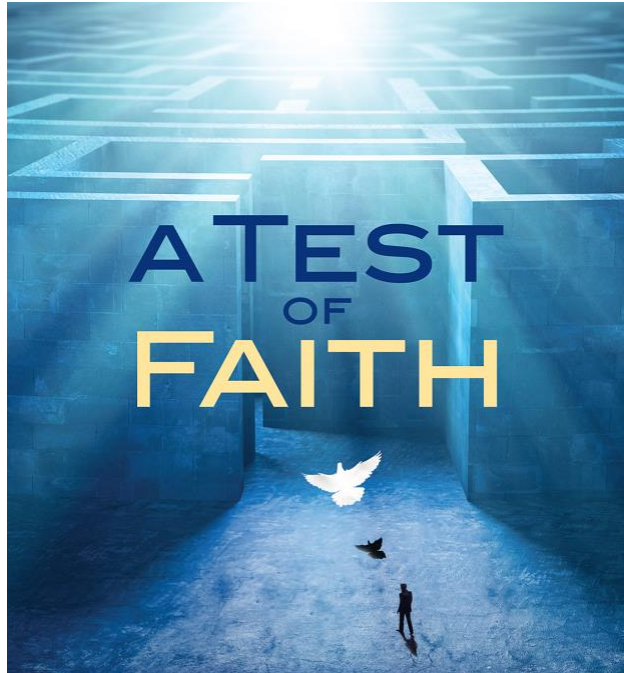
Question: Why did the Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah lose? To give themselves the advantage, the five kings chose a battlefield that could be defended by an outnumbered army with the advantage of familiarity with the terrain. Had they been brave and able fighters, they would have won, but the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were soft and self-indulgent (fat and out of shape). Not only were they defeated, they fled in such panic that they fell into the very pits that they had relied on to give them the upper hand (R' Hirsch). *Chumash*

Genesis 14:11 And they took אֶת־ all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah אֶת־ and all their victuals (*food*) and went their way. 12 And they took אֶת־ Lot, Abram's brother's son, who lived in Sodom אֶת־ and his goods and departed. C-MATS

Question: Why was Lot taken captive? The invaders took Lot captive because of his relationship to Abraham. They put him in a cage and boasted, "We have captured Abram's nephew!" They reasoned that the wealthy Abram would be ready to pay a stiff ransom to free his nephew. Since Lot was living in Sodom among the wicked the judgment of the wicked fell on him also. As a captive to Kedorlaomer, Lot faced torture, slavery, or death. When judgment falls on the wicked, if you live close to them, then judgment will overtake you as well. *Chumash*

Genesis 14:13 And there came one that had escaped and told Abram the Hebrew; who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eschol and brother of Aner: and these were covenant men with Abram. 14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed אֶת־ his trained servants, born in his own house, 318 men and pursued them to Dan. C-MATS

Question: What was Abram's **fourth test of faith**? Although Abram was hopelessly outnumbered, he mobilized his disciples and went into battle to rescue Lot. *Chumash*



Question: What does this show us about Abram's character? These incidents portray two of Abram's characteristics: (1) He had courage that came from יהוה; facing a powerful foe, he attacked. (2) He was prepared; he had taken time to train his men for a potential conflict. We never know when we will be called upon to complete difficult tasks. Like Abram, we should prepare for those times and take courage from יהוה when they come. Sometimes we must get involved in a messy or painful situation in order to help others. We should be willing to act immediately when others need our help. Are you willing to help others today?

Genesis 14:15 And he divided his forces against them, he and his servants went by night and attacked them and pursued them to Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. C-MATS

Question: When did Abram travel? Even at night Abram continued the pursuit, splitting up his forces to follow the fugitives as they scattered in various directions (Rashi), and he forced them to return home shamefully (Ramban). *Chumash*

Question: How far did Abram have to travel? Having conquered Sodom, Kedorlaomer left for his home country, taking many captives with him. Abram learned what had happened and chased Kedorlaomer from his home in Hebron past Dan and beyond Damascus. There he defeated the king and rescued the captives, among them Lot.

Genesis 14:16 And he brought back אֵת all the goods and also אֶת־ Lot, his brother and his goods and also אֶת־ the women אֶת־ and the people. C-MATS



Abram Fights His Enemies Who Hold His Nephew



Abram Rescues Lot, the Women, and Goods



Lot and His Family taken Home by Abram

Genesis 14:17 And the King of Sodom went out לקרא אתו to meet him after his return from the slaughter of אֶת־ Chedorlaomer וְאֶת־ and the kings that were אתו with him at the valley of Shaveh, which is the Kings Valley. 18 And Melchizedek (king of righteousness), King of Salem, brought out bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high of Elohim. (Prophecy Fulfilled-Gen. 14:18 A priest after Melchizedek-Hebrews 6:20; A King-Hebrews 7:2; The Last Supper foreshadowed-Matthew 26:26-29). C-MATS

Question: Who is Melchizedek, King of Salem? He is the Messiah. Hebrews 7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high Elohim, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like to the Son of Elohim; abides a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. C-MATS

Genesis 14:19 And He blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the most High Elohim, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 And blessed be the most High Elohim, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And he (Abram) gave Him a tenth of everything. C-MATS

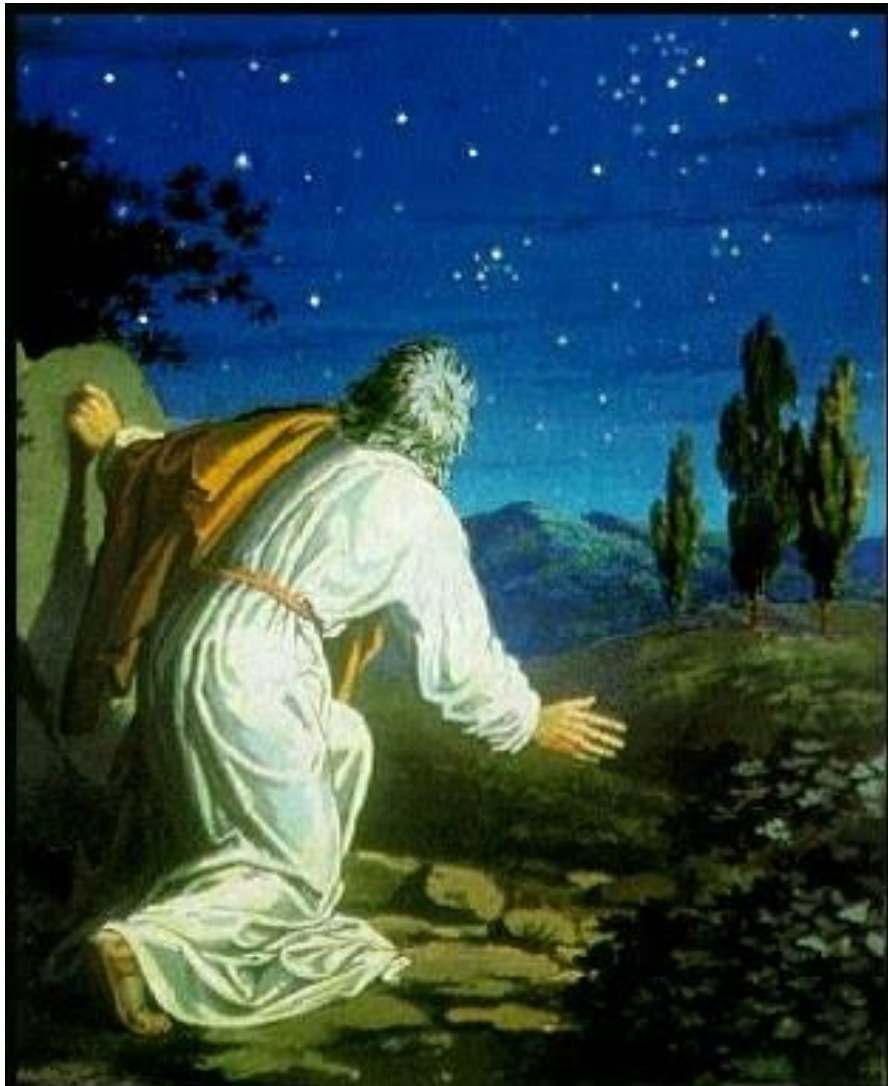


Melchizedek blesses Abraham

Genesis 14:21 And the King of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the persons and take the goods for yourself. 22 And Abram said to the King of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand *in oath* to יהוה, the most high Elohim, the maker of heaven and earth, 23 That *I will not take a thread or sandal thong of anything that is yours; otherwise you should say I have made rich אתי* Abram: 24 I will take only what the young men have eaten and the share of the spoil for the men who went *אתי with me*: Aner, Eshcol and Mamre; let them take their portion.
C-MATS

Question: What oath did Abram make to Elohim? He promised not to take any of the captured possessions. Elohim had promised to make him rich by saying, “**and I will bless you**”. Abram did not want anyone to give him any treasures and then say that they made Abram rich. *Chumash*

Question: Who were Abram’s allies? Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre



יהוה appears to Abram

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of יהוה came to Abram in a vision saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* your shield and your exceeding great reward. 2 And Abram said, Adonai יהוה, what will you give me, seeing I am childless and the steward of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus? C-MATS

Question: Who was the first person to call יהוה his master? Abram was the first person ever to refer to יהוה as Adonai (Master). *Chumash*

Genesis 15:3 And Abram said, “You have given me no seed (*child*) and no one born in my house *is* אתי *my* heir.” 4 And the word of יהוה *came* to him saying, “This will not be your heir; but rather a child that will come from your own body will be your heir.” 5 And He brought אתו *him* outside and said, “Look now toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to number אתם *them*, so will your seed (*descendants*) be” 6 And he believed in ביהוה and He counted it to him *as* righteousness. C-MATS



“Count the stars, if you are able to number them,
so will your descendants be”

Question: What did Abram do that יהוה counted to him as righteous? Abram did not request of יהוה a sign showing him that he would really have a son. He just believed what יהוה said. *Chumash*

Question: How does יהוה consider our acts of faith? יהוה considered Abram's faith as an act of righteousness (Rashi). יהוה considers our acts of faith as righteousness and counts it in our favor towards our rewards in the Kingdom to come. *Chumash*

Genesis 15:7 And He said to him, I *am* יהוה that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you אֶתְּ this אֶרֶץ land to inherit it. 8 And he said, Adonai יהוה how will I know that I will inherit it? 9 And He said to him, Choose for Me a heifer three years old, a she goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove and a young pigeon. C-MATS

Question: Why did Abram take the animals and perform the ritual? יהוה commanded Abram to take the animals and perform the following ritual in order to seal the covenant and give it the status of an irreversible oath (Sforno). Even though the righteous effect of the Patriarchs may have dissolved over the generations, a covenant, by definition, is irreversible. *Chumash*

Genesis 15:10 And Abram brought Him אֶתְּ all these *animals* and divided אֶתְּ them in the middle and laid each piece against one another: אֶתְּ and the birds he did not divide. C-MATS

Question: Who does Abram bring the requested animals to? Abram brings the requested animals to אֶתְּ.

Genesis 15:11 And when the birds *of prey* came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove אֶתְּ them away. 12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram and a horror of great darkness fell upon him. 13 And He said to Abram, “Know for sure that your seed will be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs and will serve them and they will afflict אֶתְּ them for four hundred years.” C-MATS

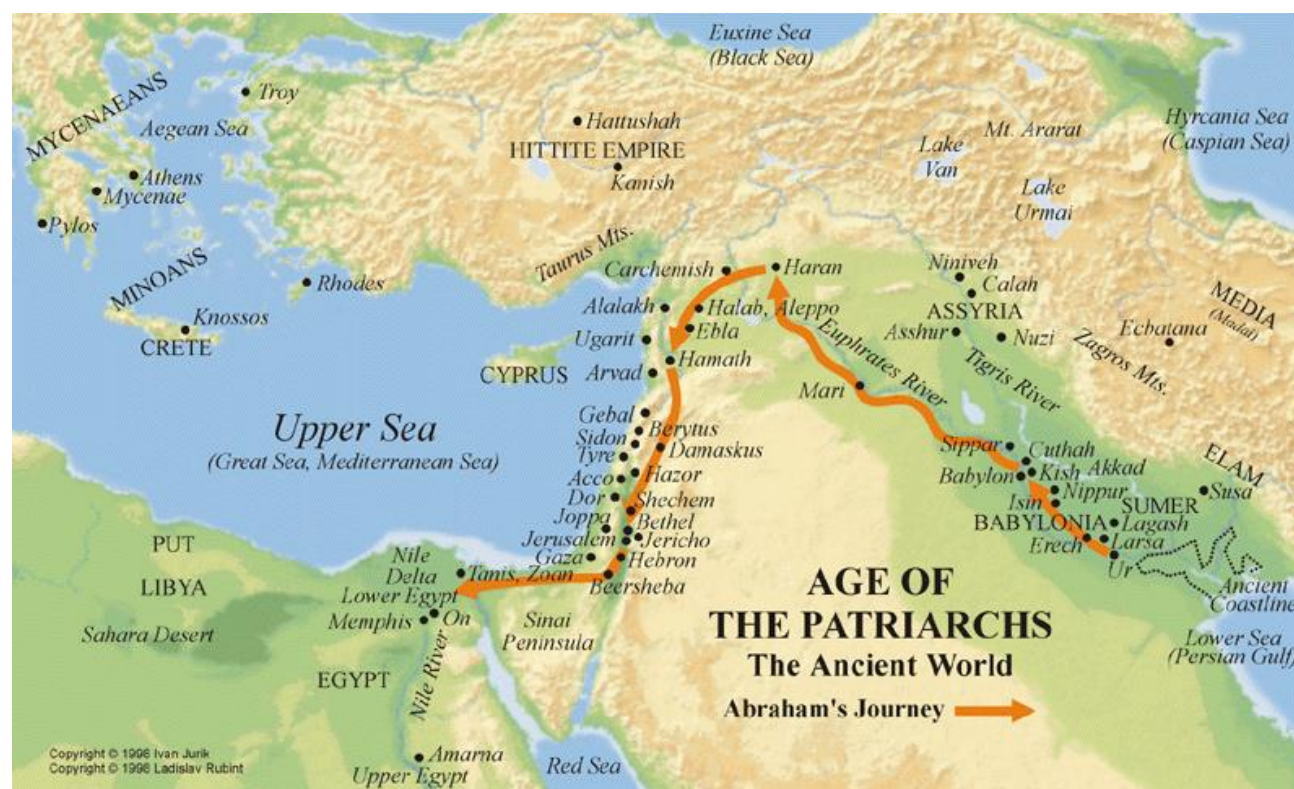


Abram Guarding His Sacrifice (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Question: How long were Abraham and his descendents aliens on the land? There would be a total of 400 years of alien status. The calculation of the 400 years would begin thirty years after the birth of Isaac; since Isaac never had the permanent home or the prestige and honor enjoyed by Abraham, he and his offspring were considered aliens, even during the years that they lived in Israel. There would be 210 years of literal exile in Egypt, and also the 20 years that Jacob spent with Laban in Haran. The servitude mentioned in this prophecy took place during the last 116 years of the Egyptian servitude, the last 86 years of which were a time of harsh oppression, when Pharaoh intensified the suffering of the Israelites. After those four hundred years, Abraham's offspring would be able to take possession of the Land.

Genesis 15:14 And also אֶת־ that nation, whom they will serve I will judge: and then they will come out with great possessions. C-MATS

Question: What nations did the Israelites serve? The four kingdoms (Babylon, Persia and Media, Greece, and Edom) will perish because they enslaved Israel. *Chumash*



Question: What does it mean, “then they will come out with great possessions”? The Israelites left Egypt with much money, as it is said, “And they plundered אֶת־ the Egyptians.” Exodus 12:36 *Chumash*

Genesis 15:15 אֶתֶּךָ And you will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. C-MATS

Question: How was Abram spared from these sufferings? יהוה assured Abram that he himself would be spared the sight of these sufferings and that he would have the satisfaction of seeing his offspring follow in his footsteps. Implied in this prophecy was that Ishmael would repent in Abram's lifetime and that Esau would not begin his career of sin until after Abram's death. Therefore, Abram died five years before his time, and on that very day, Esau rebelled. Abram was spared seeing his grandson rebel. It also meant that even Abram's idol-worshiping father, Terah, would repent (Rashi). *Chumash*

Discuss: If a child rebels against יהוה and disobeys his parents, what grief does this cause his parents? Should the rebellious child be punished measure for measure?

Genesis 15:16 *In the fourth generation they will return here again to this land: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* C-MATS

Question: Why must יהוה wait 400 years to punish the Amorites? It would be four generations after the beginning of the Egyptian exile, and the Amorites -- representing all the Canaanite nations -- will have accumulated enough sin to deserve expulsion. The latter condition was necessary because יהוה does not punish a nation until its "measure of sin is full." This is an example of His patience, for even the worst sinners are not punished until they have had more than ample opportunity to repent (Rashi). *Chumash*



Smoking furnace



Flaming torch

Genesis 15:17 It came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark that a smoking furnace and a flaming torch passed between those pieces of meat. 18 On that same day made יהוה אֶת־ with Abram a covenant saying, "To your seed have I given אֶת־ this אֶת־ land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 אֶת־ The Kenites אֶת־ and the Kenizzites אֶת־ and the Kadmonites 20 אֶת־ And the Hittites אֶת־ and the Perizzites אֶת־ and the Rephaims 21 אֶת־ and the Amorites אֶת־ and the Canaanites אֶת־ and the Girgashites אֶת־ and the Jebusites. C-MATS

Question: When did יהוה come to Abram? At sunset

Question: What was the smoking furnace and flaming torch that passed between the pieces of meat? In Gen 15:18 it is both יהוה and את that are manifested as the 'smoking furnace and a flaming torch' who make the covenant with Abram, while Abram is sleeping. The flaming torch is הוה because he is a "consuming fire" and "a pillar of fire". Deuteronomy 4:24 For יהוה your Elohim is a consuming fire, a jealous El. The smoking furnace is את Messiah, because he is "a pillar of cloud" or smoke. Exodus 33:10 And saw all the people את Pillar, of the Cloud stand at the Tabernacle door: and all the people stood up at his tent door and worshipped. C-MATS

Question: Why was Abram sleeping when the covenant was made? את יהוה knew that Abram could not keep this covenant, since he lived in flesh. The flesh is not perfect, but את יהוה is perfect and He kept the covenant for us. The Messiah came to die for our sins, so we could continue this covenant with Him. C-MATS

Question: The Torah lists the ten nations whose territories comprise יהוה's gift to the descendants of Abraham. Only the last seven were actually conquered by Joshua, but the lands of the first three -- the Kennites, Kennizites, and Kadmonites -- would belong to Edom, Moab, and Ammon. When would these territories belong to Israel? Those territories will not belong to Israel until Messianic times. And they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines on the west; together shall they spoil את them of the east upon Edom and Moab; they shall lay their hand; and the Children of Ammon shall obey them. Isaiah 11:14 Chumash

Genesis 16:1 Now Sarai, Abram's אִשָּׁת wife, bore him no children: and she had a maidservant, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. C-MATS

Question: Who was Hagar? She was Pharaoh's daughter, an Egyptian princess. When Pharaoh saw the miracles that were done for Sarah, he said, "It is better that my daughter be a handmaid in this household, than a mistress in another household." Chumash

Genesis 16:2 Sarai said to Abram, now, יהוה has restrained me from bearing (children): please, go in to my maid; it may be that I may have children through her. Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. C-MATS

Question: Why did Sarah wait 10 years before she gave Hagar to Abram? This is the allotted time for a woman who has lived ten years with her husband and has not born children to him, when he is obligated to marry another. Chumash

Question: What was Sarai's plan? Recognizing that it was she who was infertile, Sarah suggested that Abraham marry her maidservant Hagar, and, if a son were born, Sarah would raise him, so that he would be considered her adopted child. Chumash

Genesis 16:3 And after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, took Sarai, אִשָּׁה *wife of Abram*, אֵת Hagar, her Egyptian maid and gave אֵתָהּ *her* to her husband Abram to be his wife. 4 And Abram went in to Hagar and she conceived: and when Hagar saw that she had conceived she despised her mistress, Sarai. 5 And Sarai said to Abram, “This outrage being done to me is your fault! I have given my maid to you to sleep with; and when she saw that she had conceived, she despised me: let יְהוָה judge between me and you.” 6 But Abram said to Sarai, “Your maid *is* under your control. Do with her as it pleases you.” And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from Sarai. C-MATS



Sarai gives Hagar to Abram

Question: Why did Sarai treat Hagar harshly? Sarah's intent was not malicious, but to force Hagar to cease her insulting demeanor. But instead of acknowledging Sarah's superior position as her mistress, Hagar fled (Abarbanel; Sforno). *Chumash*



'Expulsion of Hagar'

Genesis 16:7 And the Angel of יהוה found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness on the way to Shur. 8 And He said to Hagar, “Sarai’s maid, *From where have בָּאת you come and where are you going?*” And she said, “I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai.” 9 And the Angel of יהוה said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit yourself to her.” 10 And the Angel of יהוה said to her, “I will multiply exceedingly את־ your seed that it may not be numbered because of *its* multitude.” 11 And the Angel of יהוה said to her, “You are with child and will have a son וְקָרָאת and you [shall] call his name Ishmael, because יהוה has heard your affliction. 12 And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man and every man’s hand against him; and he will live in the presence of all his brothers.” C-MATS

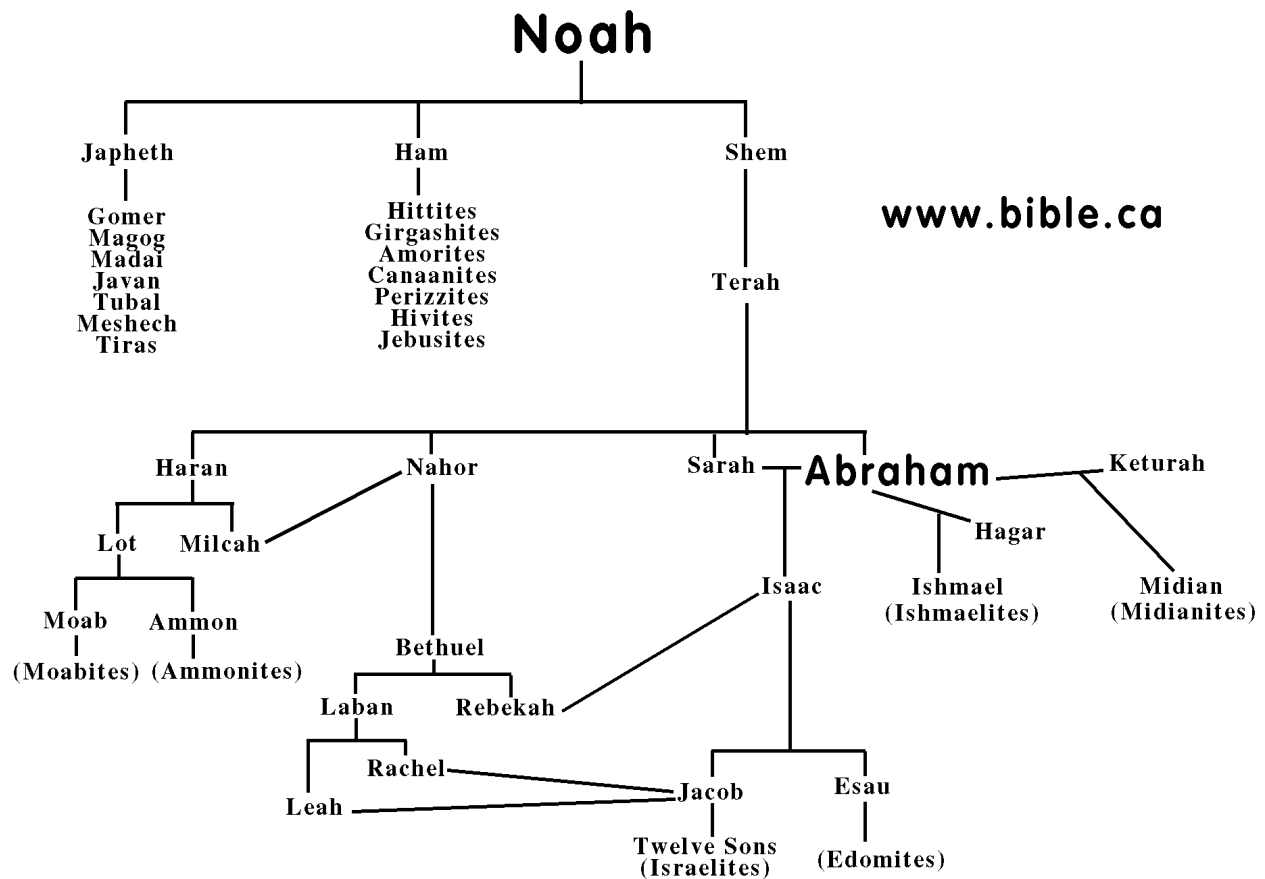


'Hagar in the Wilderness'

Question: What kind of man did יהוה say that Ishmael would be? A man who loves the wilderness to hunt beasts, as it is written in Genesis 21:20: “And was Elohim with את־ the boy; and he grew and lived in the wilderness and became an archer.” He will be an untamed bandit, a hated plunderer, and warrior. Everyone will hate him and attack him, because his seed will be numerous. He would even live at odds with his kinsmen. Chumash

Genesis 16:13 And she called the name of יהוה that spoke to her, את־הָּ You El See Me: for she said, רָאִיתִי I see Him who sees me. 14 Therefore, the well was called Beer-lahai-roi (*well of living One - my seer*); it is between Kodesh (*sanctuary*) and Bered (*hail*). 15 Hagar gave birth to a son for Abram: and Abram called his son’s name, Ishmael. 16 And Abram was 86 years old when gave birth Hagar את־ Ishmael to Abram. C-MATS

Question: What did Hagar call יהוה? The One who sees all things



Abraham's Family Tree from Noah

Genesis 17:1 And when Abram *was* 99 years old, יהוה appeared to Abram and said to him, “I *am* El Shaddai, walk before Me and be blameless (*flawless*). 2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you and will multiply אֹתְךָ you exceedingly.” 3 Abram fell on his face: and Elohim talked אִתּוֹ with him saying, 4 “My covenant *is* with אִתְּךָ you and Me and you will be a father of many nations (*gentiles*). 5 You will no longer be called any more אֲתָּה your name Abram, but your name will be Abraham; because I have made you a father of many nations.” C-MATS

Question: Who changes Abram’s name? יהוה through אֵת changes Abram's name to Abraham. C-MATS

Genesis 17:6 I will make אֹתְךָ you exceeding fruitful and I will make nations from you and kings will come out of you. 7 I will establish אֲתָּה My covenant between Me and you and your descendants for all generations as an everlasting covenant, to be an Elohim to you and to your seed. 8 I will give to you and to your seed (*descendants*) after you אֵת the land where you are a stranger, אֵת all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their Elohim. 9 Elohim said to Abraham, וְאַתָּה And you, אֲתָּה My covenant, you will keep, both אֲתָּה you and your seed after you for all generations. C-MATS

Question: Who makes the everlasting covenant with Abraham? The everlasting covenant was made with Abraham and his descendants with יהוה through את. C-MATS

Genesis 17:10 את This is My covenant, which you will keep, between Me and you and your seed after you; every male child among you will be circumcised. 11 And you will circumcise את flesh of your foreskin; and it will be לאות sign of the covenant between Me and you. C-MATS

Question: How shall you keep this covenant? You cannot keep the covenant unless you are circumcised. Chumash

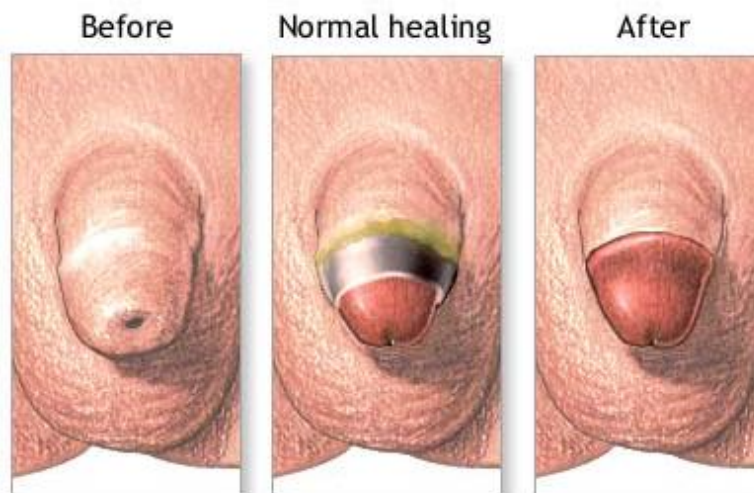


יהוה calls Abraham to be circumcised

Question: What was Abram's **fifth test of faith**? The year was 2047 from Creation; Abraham was ninety-nine years old, Sarah eighty-nine, and Ishmael thirteen. At this advanced age Abraham was given the commandment of circumcision. Despite his age and the difficulty of performing the unknown operation, he did not hesitate to comply. The commandment was given prior to Isaac's conception: (a) that he would be conceived in holiness; and (b) in order to emphasize the miracle that Abraham could have a child even though his organ had been weakened (Radak). Chumash

Question: Why did יהוה ask Abram to remove his foreskin? By removing some of his skin through circumcision -- an apparent contradiction to physical perfection -- man would become perfect, because this slight reduction of an organ would be the symbol of his covenant with יהוה. Such closeness can be achieved only through man's own efforts; had he been born that way, the lack of a foreskin would be meaningless (Radak). Closeness to יהוה through his own efforts is Man's ultimate perfection. [Genesis 17:9-14.] *Chumash*

Question: What does the word “foreskin” really mean? The name of the flesh that is removed to keep the commandment -- [orlah], commonly translated as foreskin, but more accurately is “a barrier” standing in the way of a beneficial result. Thus, for example, the sinful habits that influence a person not to change his life-style are called the orlah of the heart. Thus, although this concept is beyond human understanding, circumcision is a means to help the man ennoble himself and return to the spiritual state of Adam before he sinned. **Leviticus 26:41** *At that time I will be going against אֹתָם them וְהִבַּאתִי and I will bring them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they accept אֶת־ the punishment of their iniquity. Jeremiah 9:25* **Surely, the days come, says יהוה, that I will punish all them that are circumcised with the uncircumcision. Ezekiel 44:7** *In that you have brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, into my sanctuary, to profane it, even אֶת־ My house, when you offer אֶת־ My bread, the fat and the blood and they have broken אֶת־ My covenant, to add to all your abominations.* *Chumash*



Circumcision

Question: Why is circumcision called a “*sign of the covenant between Me and you*”? Circumcision is literally a sign, a mark, on the body, stamping its bearer as a servant of יהוה; just as their souls are different than those of other nations, so their bodies must be different. יהוה ordained that this sign be placed on the reproductive organ to symbolize that circumcision is essential to Israelite eternity (Chinuch). As a man bows his head in prayer he looks upon his circumcision and remembers his covenant with יהוה. *Chumash*

Genesis 17:12 And *any male who is eight days old* will be circumcised, every male child for all generations, he that *is born in the house*, or bought *with* money from any stranger, who *is not of your seed*. 13 He that *is born in your house* and he that *is bought with your money* must be circumcised: and My covenant will be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. C-MATS

Question: What if a man does not circumcise his child according to יהוה's law? Every man is responsible to have himself circumcised when he becomes old enough to do so (Radak). This uncircumcised male must pass his own test of faith just like Abram did. *Chumash*

Genesis 17:14 And the uncircumcised male child who *has not circumcised את* flesh of his foreskin will be cut off from his people; *את* My covenant, he has broken. C-MATS

Question: What happens to someone who refuses to be circumcised? A man must be at least 20 years old before judgment is passed on him. If the man rebels against circumcision after he is 20 years old, then he will die prematurely and/ or have no children and not receive the blessings of the covenant. *Chumash*

Genesis 17:15 Elohim said to Abraham, “*As for Sarai your wife*, you will not call *את* her name Sarai, but her name will be Sarah. 16 I will bless *אתה* her and give you a son from her: I will bless her and she will be *a mother* of nations; kings of people will come from her.” C-MATS

Question: What does Sarah mean? My Princess or princess over all nations. *Chumash*

Genesis 17:17 Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to him when he is 100 years old and will Sarah who *is* ninety years old bear *a child?*” C-MATS



Abraham fell upon his face and laughed

Question: How did Abraham laugh when he learned the news of Sarah having a baby? Abraham's laughter was not skeptical but jubilant; he laughed out of sheer joy at the news that Sarah would bear a son, while Sarah was skeptical and laughed; hence, יהוה was angry with Sarah but not with Abraham (Rashi). *Chumash*

Question: Abraham and Sarah never gave up hope and continued to pray for a child. A person shouldn't give up hope even if the blade of the sword is on his neck. How do you understand this? Even if a tough situation looks virtually impossible to overcome, we should retain our hope and know that יהוה can save and help us in ways we could never imagine.

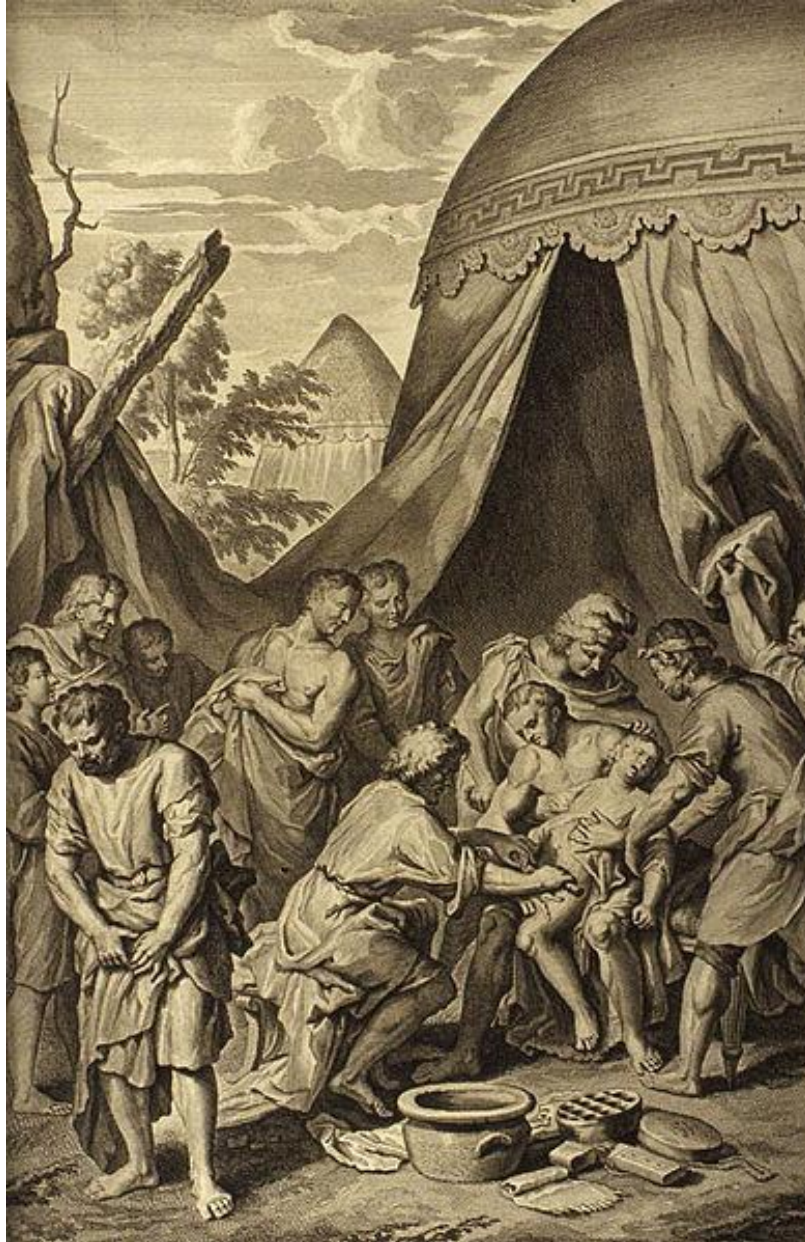
Genesis 17:18 And Abraham said to Elohim, "O that Ishmael might live before you!" **19** And Elohim said, "Sarah your wife will bear you a son; וְקָרָאתָ **אתה** and you [shall] call **אתה** his name Isaac: and I will establish **אתה** My covenant **אתו** with him for an everlasting covenant and with his seed after him. (*Prophecy Fulfilled-Gen. 17:19 The Seed of Isaac-Romans 9:7.* **20** As for Ishmael, I have heard you: I have blessed **אתו** him and will make **אתו** him fruitful and will multiply **אתו** him exceedingly; twelve princes will be born to him and I will make him a great nation." C-MATS

Question: Who was the everlasting covenant of circumcision given to? The covenant was given only to the descendants of Isaac. *Chumash*

Question: How was this prophecy fulfilled? "We see from the prophecy in this verse that 2337 years elapsed before the Arabs, Ishmael's descendants, became a great nation [with the rise of Islam in 624 C.E.] Throughout this period, Ishmael hoped anxiously, until finally the promise was fulfilled and they dominated the world. We, the descendants of Isaac, for whom the fulfillment of the promises made to us is delayed due to our sins...should surely anticipate the fulfillment of יהוה's promises and not despair" (R' Bachya citing R' Chananel). *Chumash*

Genesis 17:21 וְאֵתָּה **אתה** and My covenant I will establish with **אתה** Isaac, who Sarah will bear to you at this same time next year. **22** He finished talking **אתו** with him and Elohim left Abraham. **23** And took Abraham **אתה** Ishmael his son **אתו** and all who were born in his house **אתו** and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised **אתה** flesh of their foreskin that very day, just as Elohim had said to **אתו** him. C-MATS

Question: Whose flesh was circumcised? In Genesis 17:11,14,and 23 regarding circumcision, notice it is **את** flesh of Abraham and his descendants that will be required to be circumcised for the covenant. C-MATS



Abraham Took Ishmael with All the Males Born in His House and Circumcised Them
(illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*)

Genesis 17:24 And Abraham *was* 99 years old when he was circumcised *in the* flesh of his foreskin. **25** And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old when he was circumcised **אֵת** *in the* flesh of his foreskin. **26** In the same day Abraham was circumcised and *also* Ishmael his son. **27** And all the men of his house, born *in the* house and bought with silver (*money*) **אֶתְּ** *from* sons of strangers (*foreigners*), were circumcised **אִתּוֹ** *with him*. C-MATS

Question: On what day was Abraham circumcised? The day that Abraham entered into covenant was the day he was circumcised, which was Passover. One year later on Passover, Isaac was born. *Chumash*

Do You Know??

1. Abram's first test of faith was to leave his home and go to _____.
2. Abram took _____ his nephew with him when he left.
3. Abram's second test of faith was to go to _____ because of the famine.
4. Abram's third test of faith was when Sarai was taken into _____ household.
5. יהוה sent a _____ on Pharaoh's household to release Sarai.
6. Lot chose to live near the wicked cities of _____ and _____.
7. Abram's fourth test of faith was to go to war to get back _____.
8. Abram gave a tenth of all he owned to _____ King of Salem.
9. When Sarah is _____ years old, יהוה promises them a son.
10. Sarai's maid, originally an Egyptian princess
11. Hagar gave Abram a son named _____.
12. Abram's fifth test of faith was to be _____.
13. Abram was _____ years old when he was circumcised.
14. Circumcision is a _____ that you are a servant of יהוה.
15. Children should be circumcised when they are _____ days old
16. יהוה said that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the _____ in the sky and the _____ in the sea.

Answers:

1. Canaan
2. Lot
3. Egypt
4. Pharaoh's
5. Plague
6. Sodom and Gomorrah
7. Lot
8. Melchizedek
9. 90
10. Hagar
11. Ishmael
12. circumcised
13. 99
14. sign
15. 8
16. stars, sand

Haftorah

The *Haftorah* for this week discusses Abraham's journey to the land of Canaan at יהוה's request, and touches upon Abraham's miraculous battle against the four kings, both of which are described in this week's Torah reading. Isaiah reminds them of Abraham's greatness, how after arriving in Canaan he pursued and defeated four mighty kings. "The coastlands saw *it* and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid." Nevertheless, the nations who witnessed these miracles did not abandon their ways.

Isaiah 40:27 Why *do* you say, O Jacob and speak, O Israel, my way is hidden from מִיְהוָה and my judgment is passed over from my Elohim? 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard *that the* everlasting Elohim יְהוָה, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. 29 He gives power to the faint; and to them that has no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths will faint and be weary and the young men will utterly fall: 31 But they that wait upon יְהוָה will renew *their* strength; they will mount up with wings as eagles; they will run and not be weary; *and* they will walk and not faint. Isaiah 41:1 Keep silence before Me, O islands; and let the people renew *their* strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment. 2 Who raised up the righteous *man* from the east, called him to His feet, gave the nations before him and made him rule over kings? He gave *them* as the dust to his sword *and* as driven stubble to his bow. 3 He pursued them and passed safely; *even by* the way *that* he had not gone with his feet. 4 Who has performed and finished *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I יְהוָה the First אֶת־ and the Last; I *am* He. 5 The coastlands saw *it* and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near and came. 6 They helped everyone אֶת־ his neighbor; and *everyone* said to his brother, Be of good courage. 7 So encouraged the carpenter אֶת־ goldsmith and he that smoothes *with* the hammer אֶת־ him that beats the anvil saying, It is ready for the welding; and he fastened it with nails, *that* it should not be moved. 8 אֶת־ And you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob who I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend. 9 *You* who I have taken from the ends of the earth and called you from the chief men of it and said to you, אֶת־ *You are* My servant; I have chosen you and not cast you away. 10 Do not fear; for I *am* with you: be not dismayed; for I *am* your Elohim: I will strengthen you; indeed, I will help you; indeed, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness. 11 Certainly all they that were incensed against you will be ashamed and confounded: they will be as nothing; and they that strive with you will perish. 12 You will seek them and will not find them, *even* them that contended with you: they that war against you will be as nothing and as a thing of nothing. 13 For I יְהוָה your Elohim will hold your right hand, saying to you, Fear not; I will help you. 14 Fear not, *you* worm Jacob and *you* men of Israel; I will help you, says יְהוָה and your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. 15 Certainly I will make you a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: you will thresh the mountains and beat them small and will make the hills as chaff. 16 You will fan them and the wind will carry them away and the whirlwind will scatter אֹתָם them: אֶת־ And you will rejoice in בִּיהוָה and will glory in the Holy One of Israel. C-MATS

Brit Chadashah

Question: Who did Abraham give his tithes to? Yahusha Hebrews 7:1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high Elohim, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of Elohim; abides a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the Torah, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. 11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the Torah, what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the Torah. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertains to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Adonai Yahusha sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there arises another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the Torah of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifies, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the Torah made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh unto Elohim. C-MATS

Question: Circumcision was given by יהוה as a special sign between His People and Him, but יהוה wants more than a physical sign. What circumcision does יהוה want from the believers? Colossians 2:11 In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Mashiah: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of Elohim, who has raised him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his stake; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. C-MATS

Question: When Abraham was old, Elohim called him to perform what act of faith? Acts 7:1 Then said the high priest, Are these things so? 2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The Elohim of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 3 And said unto him, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I shall show you. 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from there, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein you now dwell. 5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. 6 And Elohim spoke on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. 7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said Elohim: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. C-MATS

Question: What promise was given to Abraham by Elohim? Galatians 3:15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it is but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannuls, or adds thereto. 16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to your seed, which is Mashiach. 17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of Elohim in Mashiach, the Torah, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18 For if the inheritance be of the Torah, it is no more of promise: but Elohim gave it to Abraham by promise. C-MATS

Question: How did Abram receive the circumcision? He received it by faith. Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatsoever the Torah says, it says to them who are under the Torah: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before Elohim. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the Torah there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the Torah is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of Elohim without the Torah is manifested, being witnessed by the Torah and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of Elohim which is by faith of Yahusha haMashiach unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of Elohim; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Mashiach Yahusha: 25 Whom Elohim has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of Elohim; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Yahusha. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? The law of works? No: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Torah. 29 Is he the Elohim of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one Elohim, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the Torah through faith? Elohim forbid: yea, we establish the Torah. C-MATS

Question: Why was Abraham counted as righteous? His faith counted him righteous before יהוה. Romans 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he has whereof to glory; but not before Elohim. 3 For what says the scripture? Abraham believed Elohim and it was counted to him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, to whom Elohim imputes righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom יהוה will not impute sin. 9 Comes this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the Torah, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the Torah be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the Torah works wrath: for where no Torah is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the Torah, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, 17 As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even Elohim, who quickens the dead, and calls those things which be not as though they were. 18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, "So shall your seed be." 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of Elohim through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to Elohim; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Yahusha our Master from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

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Question: Faith is justified only if it works through what? Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Mashiach has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Mashiach shall profit you nothing. 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Torah. 4 Mashiach is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you is justified by the Torah; you are fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Yahusha haMashiach neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith avails which works by love.

C-MATS

Question: Sarah walked in faith to believe Elohim for what miracle? **Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is Elohim. 11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. C-MATS**

"REBEL WITH A CAUSE"

Yuchh! Cindy ran coughing to the washroom sink and felt like she had just swallowed an ashtray. How could anyone stand putting these things in their mouths? Yet that was just what all the kids in the crowd Cindy had been hanging out with lately were doing, and it kind of made her feel like she had to start smoking too. She liked being part of a tight group of friends since it made her feel accepted and not alone. But being part of them meant doing what they did, even if some of the things they were into made Cindy uncomfortable. For a while she had been able to avoid the smoking issue by saying she wasn't in the mood. But today during mid-morning break, Cindy felt stuck. Vicky, one of the group's leaders of the group which called itself 'the Rebels', handed her the cigarette she was smoking and told her to take a puff. Cindy felt she really didn't have a choice and took a few puffs and now she felt totally nauseous, her throat was burning and she had to get herself together before the next class started in a just a few minutes. The girl quickly popped a couple of breath mints into her mouth to kill the taste, and looking into the mirror over the sink, tried her best to make herself look presentable for class, although it would be a challenge to do anything with her spiky, gelled-up hair. She felt the hairstyle made her look ridiculous, but it was what all the kids were wearing, and she had gone along too - just because. History had never been one of Cindy's favorite subjects. She was much more into thinking about the present, if not the future, but the way Mrs. Travis, their teacher, taught it, then it kind of seemed real.

So despite her head still spinning from the disgusting cigarette smoke, Cindy tried to tune in. "Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people was a big rebel", the teacher remarked. Abraham was a rebel? That certainly wasn't the picture of Abraham that Cindy had in her mind. The teacher continued. "His ideas put him on one side of the river, while the whole world stood on the other. But no matter how they pressured him to be like them, no matter what they said, did, or even threatened, Abraham wouldn't budge from what he knew was right. Nobody likes to stand alone, but to Abraham, being true to himself - and to Elohim - was worth the price. He was a rebel to do what was right." Wow, thought Cindy. She could really relate to being pressured. She pushed back the hair off her forehead and cringed as the sticky gel goosed up her hand. Cindy hurried to get ready to go to lunch. She felt much more normal now that she had shampooed all that gunk out of her hair after her gym class. What a shame, she thought, that she would have to put it right back in. She reached for the tube of hair gel on her locker shelf and

was about to give it a squeeze when for some reason the morning's History class, and what the teacher had said, popped into her mind. *That Abraham must have had a lot of guts to do what he did and not just go along with things because everyone else did. I like my hair the way it is, what do I need this stuff for?* She tucked the tube, unused, back into her locker. Although she usually gulped down her sandwich in just a few bites so she could run out to the playground where her crowd was waiting, today Cindy found herself trying to eat as slowly as possible. She wasn't looking forward to how the kids were going to react to her new look. Soon enough she finished eating and - taking a deep breath - she stood up and went to face the crowd. Cindy breathed a sigh of relief when no one said anything about her hair, or even seemed to notice. Maybe this wasn't going to be so hard after all. But she had spoken too soon, because right then Vicky and a few other kids were walking towards her, all smoking and holding a pack of cigarettes.

"Hey Cindy," said Vicky, "we're all grabbing a smoke before class, and I'm sure you'd want to join the crowd." Cindy felt that everyone was looking at her and waiting for her to light up. The pressure was huge. She started to reach for the pack even though she knew smoking was a terrible thing to do. (Her dad was a doctor and he often came home with stories of someone who had checked into the hospital, or worse, checked *out* of the hospital and into the cemetery because of smoking.) But how could she just stand alone? *Stand alone!* she thought to herself. *Wasn't that just what Abraham did?* This was not going to be easy, but neither would be messing up her body with those disgusting and deadly cigarettes! She pulled back her hand. "No thanks Vicky, I don't smoke," she said, hoping that would be the end of it. But Vicky wouldn't let her off so easily. "What's the matter, you're not part of the Rebels any more?" Cindy thought fast, and smiled. "Sure I am, but even the Rebels need a rebel, don't they?" The kids laughed and the tension broke. Cindy was relieved, glad she had taken a stand. From that day on, she started hanging around less and less with the smoking crowd - they were just pushing her in a direction she didn't want to go. Soon enough she made some great new friendships with kids who shared her values, and was happy she had had the guts, like Abraham, to be a *real* rebel, that is a rebel to do what she knew was right.

Question: Why was Cindy willing at first to smoke and spike up her hair if she thought it was wrong? When we want to be close to a certain group of people, we naturally feel a desire to behave the way they behave. If the group is behaving in a positive way, this is great, and can help us grow, but like in the story, when the group is behaving negatively, we can feel - like Cindy did - pressured to go along, even against our better judgment.

Question: Do you think it would be smart for Cindy to drop that group of friends? Why or why not? Although it feels good to be part of a group, it has its price. In this case it would mean Cindy doing things that were in her eyes foolish and dangerous. She was smart enough to realize that sticking with them was pulling her in their direction, and sooner or later she would likely cave into the social pressure to act like them. So she would be making the right decision to distance herself - which in fact she did.

Question: The story refers to Abraham as being a rebel. Is rebelling against others a positive or negative thing in your eyes? Like most things, the answer has a lot to do with the circumstances, and one's motivations. To rebel for the sake of rebelling, or just to make waves, is counterproductive and unwise, especially if one is rebelling against something which is basically good. However, if like Abraham, and the girl in the story, one finds oneself surrounded by and being pulled toward negative values, then rebelling can be a very positive and brave response.

Question: Why do you think people sometimes feel embarrassed or afraid to say what they truly believe when most of the people believe differently? It feels risky to take a stand for what we think is true. People who disagree with us may try to put us down. But we learn from Abraham, who stood up for the truth, that even though the whole world disagrees, when something is important we have to take a stand.

Spiritual Exercise: How will you stand out from the others around you? Spread the truth about what you believe.

Question: Abraham was not influenced by the people around him. He continued to serve יהוה in all his ways. Does a person necessarily have to be dragged down by the people around him, or is it possible to be part of a group of wrong-doers and still do right? A human being doesn't exist in a vacuum. It is human nature to be influenced by the people around us. It is hard to resist, because the change first takes place on the subconscious level. Often before we even know we have been influenced, it's too late. Sometimes we have no choice but to be surrounded by people with values we don't share, but when we can, we should make every effort to become close to those who will lift us up, and not drag us down.

Question: It is better to appear foolish in the eyes of people all of one's life than to appear unjust in the eyes of יהוה for even a moment. What do you understand this to mean? The point here is that there can often be conflicting standards between what one's society or social circle values, and the objective human values that are given to us by יהוה. When these conflicts arise, the right choice is to remain true to Torah, even if it might mean taking the heat, or being ridiculed by the people around us.

Spiritual Exercise: יהוה promised to bless Abram and make him famous, but יהוה had one condition: Abram had to do what יהוה wanted him to do. This meant leaving his home and friends and traveling to a new land where יהוה promised to build a great nation from Abram's family. Abram obeyed, walking away from his home for יהוה's promise of even greater blessings in the future. יהוה may be trying to lead you to a place of greater service and usefulness for him. Listen to what He is saying to you today.

Question: Abram was loyal to his nephew Lot. He put his life in danger in order to protect Lot. What is a "fair weather" friend? A 'fair weather friend' is one who only remains a friend when things are easy - may be an enjoyable acquaintance, but is not a friend. A friend is someone who is ready to put himself on the line and be there even when it would be more comfortable or fun not to do it.

Question: Should the same degree of loyalty apply to family members? Families should always be loyal to each other. Families that are loyal and supportive give each family member a priceless gift of security and stability.

Question: Do you think it is a coincidence who our family members are? It's not at all. A family is a spiritual unit. יהוה has specifically chosen who should share a family and we accomplish a big part of our life's task when we interact with our family members in a positive and supporting way.

Question: To whom do you think a person owes more allegiance, their family or their friends? We should try to be good to everyone, but when it comes to family, we have to walk the extra mile. Friends, while important, come and go, but family is ours for life.

Question: How was Abraham different from those around him? The world in Abraham's time was worshipping meaningless idols and had forgotten that יהוה existed. But Abraham knew better. Instead of just going along with everybody else, he stood up for what was true, and tried to teach the world to see it too. He took a big risk, but by telling the truth he helped bring יהוה back into people's lives and went down in history as the father of the Hebrew people. It is from him that we learn to stand up for the truth.

Question: Is it wrong to be part of a group? Being part of a group is great, but it can also drag us down if there is some negative behavior in the group and we feel pressured to go along. You many feel that it is too hard to go against the crowd. יהוה instructed Abraham to pull himself away from the negative behaviors of the people around him and be his own man. We can learn from Abraham to stick to our values of right and wrong even if those around us try to get us to act otherwise.

Resources: "Weekly Torah Portion" from www.aish.com

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures C-MATS www.AlephTavScriptures.com

The Book of Jashar- Joshua 10:13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar.