

#3 Lech Lecha Genesis 12:1-17:27

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * Don't be attracted to what is worldly and don't be confused by the false good they preach. (They are not teaching the truth about how to be good; they are lying).
- * Allow God into your life. You are not safe by refusing God. (Our own power is meager compared to God our creator).
- * God gives us more than we expect. (Do we want to make up our own false world to live in? It will fall far short of what God wants for us. Believe in what God can do both in the present and our future eternal life. Would you give up eternal life just to go after some little thing you desire?)
- * Stay in the safety of living for God. Stay in God's protection and away from darkness. (Do you want to be lost in a tunnel of darkness for eternity? Don't get lost in the darkness and sin of this evil world.)

Lech Lecha means, "go forth yourself." The portion Lech Lecha begins with God telling Abram to leave Haran when he was 75 years old to go to the land that He would show Abram and that God would give the land of Canaan to his descendants. God's protection would be with him and through Abram, God would bless the whole earth. After Abram gets to Canaan he goes to Egypt during a famine and tells Sarai to pretend to be his sister. Pharaoh gives gifts to Abram for Sarai to be his wife, but after some plagues in Pharaoh's house, Pharaoh finds out that Sarai is Abram's wife and he sends him away with the gifts. After they get back to Canaan, Abram becomes wealthy and there was some quarreling between Abram's and Lot's herdsmen. Lot goes off to the east to live, but he finds out that the men of Sodom are very evil. God instructs Abram to walk through the land that God was giving him. After that, Lot and his family get taken away as war booty. Abram rescues Lot and as Abram returns, Melchizedek (Shem – Abram's 7th great grandfather) meets Abram.

They eat bread and wine together, Shem blesses Abram, and Abram gives Shem a tenth of the booty. After this, God again promises Abram that he would have many descendants, tells him about their enslavement in Egypt, and tells him that his descendants will inherit Canaan. After sunset God makes a covenant with Abram and gives him the specific territory boundaries of the land He was giving Him. Abram still doesn't have offspring so he has a child by Hagar when he was 86. When Abram is ninety nine years old, God tells Abram to walk in His presence and have a pure heart. God changes Abram's name to Abraham and reaffirms an everlasting covenant with him and God tells him that circumcision is to be a sign of the covenant for his descendants.

Shaul (Paul) tells us we have received Abraham's covenant through the Messiah (Galatians 3:29). Shaul says that adult circumcision was not to be done, probably to save life. Circumcision for an adult can be very dangerous. Yeshua and the Torah teaches us that saving life supercedes keeping the Sabbath and therefore other commands (Luke 14:5). Shaul says children should still be circumcised; he taught circumcision (Galatians 5:11).

God also changes Sarai's name to Sarah and God says he will bless her and make her the mother of nations. God tells Abraham that his son Yishma'el will have twelve sons, but Isaac will be heir to God's covenant. The portion ends with Abraham having all the men in his household circumcised.

The Haftarah portion is Isaiah 40:27-41:16. Isaiah 40:31 NKJV says, "But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Just as God renewed Abraham and Sarah, God can help us and give us strength.

The Jewish writings tell us that Abraham resisted idolatry and believed on the one true God. Perhaps Abraham was raised for a while with his believing relatives from the house of Noah as the Jewish writings suggest. Noah died just before Abraham was born. Lot went off to the east instead of staying with Abraham, the person that God chose to bless the earth. God said that He would bless the whole earth through Abraham and also gives the specific boundaries of God's eternal promise to Abraham. Circumcision was to be a sign to Abraham and his descendants of God's eternal covenant.

Of particular note, God tells Abraham to walk in His presence – perhaps this is referring to the time in the Garden when Adam and Eve walked in the presence of God. Although believers in the true God no longer lived in the Garden, they could still live in God's presence. They also could talk to God as evidenced in the Tanakh and also God could speak to them. Believers in Yeshua not only have the opportunity to walk in God's presence, but have His presence in them through the gift of the Holy Spirit. How much more should we all walk in God's presence through the Holy Spirit.

Don't be attracted to what is worldly and don't be confused by the false good they preach. They are not teaching the truth about how to be good; they are lying. They don't know they are lying; perhaps they are just spouting off about some popular ideas that have nothing to do with truth or God. Perhaps they have some form of reasoning. They say their way of doing things is good even though God says it is bad.

There are a lot of scriptures that talk about this.

Proverbs 14:12, 14-16 NKJV:

12 "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

14 "The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied from above."

15 "The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps."

16 "A wise man fears and departs from evil, but a fool rages and is self-confident."

Allow God into your life. You are not safe by refusing God. Think about it, our own power is meager compared to God our creator. We think we are safe making our own decisions and weighing the ideas of others, but the Bible says there are some things that end in death. That should be enough for us to choose God. Worse yet, spiritual death far outweighs physical death because we not only lose our chance at eternal life, but have condemned ourselves to eternity in the lake of fire. "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire;" Revelation 20:15 NKJV.

The personal thoughts in one's heart will only result in living by our own ways instead of God's ways. Abraham decided he was going to do things God's way and God valued that. It was not an easy road for Abraham, but he stayed faithful and the Bible testifies to that as he encounters God; God renews his promises to him on several occasions. Perhaps what is most important is that it says about Abraham in Genesis 15:6 NKJV, "And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

Faith is an important part of life. Will we trust in mankind, in ourselves, or in the creator God? God can give us more than we expect. Do we want to make up our own false world to live in? It will fall far short of what God wants for us. Believe in what God can do both in the present and our future eternal life. Would you give up eternal life just to go after some little thing you desire?

Abraham believed that God would give him a child of lineage that would change the world and bless the world even at the age of 99. That is amazing. God gave him a son by the name of Isaac from whom the Messiah Yeshua would be born. Perhaps we'd think it was a big deal if our son became president, but

what about bringing someone into the world that would change the world. Yeshua (Jesus) is known throughout the whole world and asks us to live right and love one another. The world is a better place because of Him; if only people would listen instead of making up their own way to live.

Stay in the safety of living for God. Stay in God's protection and away from darkness. This world has a lot of shellfish self-seeking people. There are evil people in this world who are bringing destruction instead of blessing into the world. The Bible says they are fools. Don't believe what they say. Be wise and stay away from evil. Do they think they won't have to stand before God someday?

Being lost and without God in our lives is like being lost in a tunnel of darkness for eternity? Don't do it. I was trying to imagine what it would be like to never truly see the light of day again. Yeshua our Messiah talked about blind leaders of the blind. It is a sad picture. Is that what we want to be part of. The only true and good way to live is to turn toward God and the light.

It is tremendously sad the judgement people are bringing on themselves. Don't be trapped in evil and wrong doing. Stand up for what God says is right like Abraham did and bring blessing into the world. It was just one man standing up for what is right, but we all can be a person of light to the world just as Abraham was if we will believe in God's ways. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith;" 1 John 5:4 NKJV.