



Lech Lecha ~ Go, You Go
B'reshith / Genesis 12:1 ~ 17:27
Beit Emet ~ Vancouver, WA
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11/5/11
www.hearoisrael.org

At the close of last week's Torah portion, **No'ach**, we were introduced to Avram, as the verses were speaking about the lineage of his father Terah and grandfather Nahor. We also learned that Terah had three sons; Avram, Nahor and Haran. Here too, we were told that Avram married Sarai. Now, there are many things written about Avram's early years that do not appear in the written Torah. The Oral Torah and Midrashic writings tell us the story of Avraham's life and family. I suggest that in studying this week's parsha, you read chapters 7 ~ 17 of the Book of Jasher (*Yashar*), if you have a copy. If not, we have a copy that you can download and save on our website, under the "**Other Downloads**" tab, at: http://hearoisrael.org/New_Downloads.html . This reading will give you a good distillation of the oral and midrashic teachings.

Now too, before we get started, I need to bring up something that we always talk about in relation to the lives of the Patriarchs, our forefathers. As we begin to learn and understand their lives and deeds anew this Torah cycle, we need to remember this very important principle. This is a key principle of Torah interpretation that opens up the lives of the Patriarchs to our understanding in such a way, as to make their lives truly living examples for us today and for our future. This principle is, in the Hebrew, "**Ma'aseh avot siman le'vanim**". In English, it states, "**The deeds of the fathers (our ancestors) are signposts to the children**". Now, there are three different ways that this concept helps us interpret Scripture; each representing a deeper level of meaning, similar to the concept of PaRDeS, that we've also looked at extensively. In other words, "**Ma'aseh avot siman le'vanim**" is a three tiered principal in which each level adds deeper meaning to the event for us.

The first level, or "**plain sense explanation**", says that what the "**fathers**" did, and the choices they made, should be examples to us, the children. We should learn both the good and the bad from their acts and decisions and apply those lessons to our lives and walk. The second, the "**deeper explanation**", is one of historical precedent. What happened to the "**fathers**" will happen to the children. While the Feasts, or "**Mo'edim**" that we celebrate each year are remembrances of historical events that HaShem has told us to keep and proclaim, they are also the rehearsals of future events in Elohim's dealings with B'nei Yisra'el. And next, in the "**deepest level**" of explanation; each of the main, or more noteworthy, "**forefathers**" is identified (*through their life experience*) with a particular "**midah**", or "**attribute**" or "**quality**" of Yah's nature and character, that we should seek to adopt into our own character. This is a large part of what we study each year during the "**Sefirat HaOmer**" or

“Counting of the Omer”. In the case of Avraham Avinu (*Avraham our father*); his life exemplifies the **“midah”** (Yah’s attribute) of **“Chesed”** or **“Loving-kindness”**. Yitzaq walked in **“Gevurah”** or **“Discipline”** and **“Strictness”**. And, Ya’aqob is associated with **“Tiferet”** or **“Beauty and Balance in Emet (Truth)”**, which is combination of **“Loving-kindness”** and **“Discipline”**.

So, by simply living their lives, our forefathers were not only ethical examples for us; but, they set in motion historical precedents that we will experience, as Yisra’el, in these **“last days”**. And, through the **“midot”** (**attributes** or **qualities**) that were placed in them, by Elohim, and cultivated, over the course of their lives, and added to by successive generations; they impart to us the culmination of these attributes, which we are to cultivate within ourselves. The **Chazal** (*the sages of blessed memory*) tell us that every Israelite must ask himself, *“When will I be able to achieve what Avraham, Yitzhak, and Ya’aqob achieved?”* Meaning, *the potential of every Israelite is that of each of the Patriarchs. “What can we aspire to and achieve in our generation?”*

OK, this week’s Torah portion is entitled **“Lech Lecha”**, which literally translates, **“Go, you go out”**. It is the story of Avraham being **“called out”** of Babylon and becoming the first Hebrew. We will see that our own journey is mirrored in Avraham’s, if we’ll just look. An alternate meaning of the Hebrew word **“Lech”** is **“to proceed”**. As Rabbi Eli Tougher writes in this week’s [Garden of Torah](#), *“In Hebrew, this indicates ‘the beginning of a journey’”*.

We begin with **B’reshith / Genesis 12:1; And YHVH said to Avram, “Go yourself out of your land, from your relatives and from your father’s house, to a land which I show you.** It’s very interesting here that HaShem seems to be repeating Himself to Avram. First He tells Avram to leave his land. Then He says to leave his relatives. It actually says in the Hebrew **“go yourself out from your birthplace”**. Then He tells him to go out from his father’s house. Now, let’s look at a couple of things here. We read just last week in **B’reshith / Genesis 11:31-32; And Terah took his son Avram and his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Avram’s wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Kena’an. And they came to Haran and dwelt there. And the days of Terah came to be two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.** So, by the time HaShem tells Avram to leave **“his land”** (*eretz*) and **“his birthplace”** (*moledeth*), he had already left. In fact, we read that Terah’s intended destination was the **“land of Kena’an”**. But, instead, Avram’s father stopped and dwelt in Haran. Terah likely named that place Haran as that was the name of one of Avram’s brothers, Lot’s father. Haran died while they still lived in Ur, according to **Chapter 11**. Next, Elohim tells Avram to leave his **“father’s house”**. This is also very interesting in that his father had already died. Bear with me; we’ll see the connection in a minute.

HaShem was telling Avram to **“come out”**, not only from Babylon, as Haran was still in the Nimrod’s empire along with Ur; but, also to leave his past, and who he was, behind. While Avram believed and trusted that HaShem is the only true Elohim and Creator of all things, he had to leave all the things that had influenced his life. His family and father, Terah, were idol worshippers. Nimrod, who was the totalitarian government of their homeland, was exceedingly evil. HaShem chose Avram, just as He has chosen the Children of Yisra’el. In order for Yah to use Avram and work through him, Avram had to leave his former estate and walk in his calling. This was the very foundation of the Hebrew understanding of **“halacha”** (*walking out Torah*). Avram had to leave all the worldly security he had known and trust completely in El Shaddai (*El Sufficient*), in order to fulfill his calling, his destiny.

Regarding this, Rabbi Touger adds, *“Real spiritual progress requires that one leaves one’s current state behind. Yet as long as an individual’s growth depends entirely on his own power, his progress*

will be limited. Nobody can exceed the bounds of his own understanding. When, by contrast, one's progress is guided by G-d, there are no limits to the potential for growth. The Torah and its mitzvot can take a person far beyond his natural horizons. To accentuate this point, G-d tells Avraham to proceed 'to the land which I will show you,' without specifying a destination. The expression 'I will show you,' **arecka** in Hebrew, can also be rendered 'I will reveal you,' i.e., through the journey to Eretz Yisrael, Avraham's true self was revealed to him. This is also indicated by the expression Lech Lecha, which literally means 'go to yourself,' i.e., 'to your essence.' Avraham's willingness to put his individual will on the side and respond to G-d's command allowed a more direct connection between the Creator and the created. And in the process, a boundless potential was unleashed, for every Hebrew's soul is 'an actual part of G-d.' This is the essence of every man's spiritual journey: to transcend his ordinary way of thinking, and to tap this G-dly core."

As HaShem is speaking to Avram, He goes on to add in **B'reshith / Genesis 12:2-3**; **"And I shall make you a great nation, and bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing! And I shall bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you. And in you all the clans of the earth shall be blessed."** This is the first time of many that HaShem promises to Avram that he will be a great nation and that through him all the earth would be blessed.

I would also add something from the Hebrew that really defines what HaShem was saying here in **B'reshith 12:3** and adds profound meaning to Ya'aqob's blessing of the seed of Ephraim in **B'reshith 48:19**. HaShem says of Avram; **"And in you all the clans of the earth shall be blessed."** While this is an accurate mechanical translation, the Hebrew says much more. From the Hebrew Torah, we read it as; **"V'ani braku bekah kol mishpachot ha-adamah."** Bear with me, as we dissect this sentence. First, we have **"V'ani"** which is literally translated as **"And in you"**. Then, we have the word **"braku"**, which most translations say is **"be blessed"**, and is a *niphal stem* verb form conjugated form of the root verb **"barak"**, meaning **"to bless"**. According to Rabbinic Sages, such as Shmuel ben Meir (*grandson of Rashi*) and Hezekiah ben Manoah; also the Arba'ah Turim (a 13th Century work on Jewish Halacha, by Rabbi Ya'akov ben Asher) and 19th Century Hebrew linguist Dr. Benjamin Heidenheim, this word **"braku"** is specifically related to another niphal conjugation, which is **"m'bareek"** found in the Talmud (cf Kelaim 7:1, Sotah 43a.), which means to **"intermingle"** or to **"graft"**. As Dr. Heidenheim explains it, **"This interpretation is inspired by the fact that nowhere else besides here (in B'reshith 12:3) do we find barak in the sense of blessing in the niphal conjugation, while also in the sense of "grafting" in its common form"**. So, based upon this insight of the Hebrew by Jewish scholars, the meaning of **Verse 3** is perhaps better understood when translated as; **"And in you all the clans of the earth shall be intermingled (or grafted)."**

Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh in his video teaching this week, [Conversion, The Torah of Mashiach](#), connects this verse with **verse 5**; **And Avram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the beings whom they had made (asah) in Haran, and they set out for the land of Kena'an.** He states, **"Later, when the Torah describes how Abraham began his journey, it describes those who went with Abraham. It says that he journeyed together with, 'the souls they had made in Haran.'** This verse is literally referring to the people Abraham brought close, those that he converted. This is all before the giving of the Torah, and he made many converts. Abraham would convert the men and Sarah would convert the women and all these converts went with him to the land that God promised him: 'And the souls that they made in Haran'."

He goes on to explain the connection by essentially reminding us of what we read above about the word **"braku"** being related to **"grafting"**. Rav Ginsburgh quotes Rabbi Elazar on using the word

“**cutting**”, as it relates to the grafting of plants and vines. This term “**cutting**” involves taking a stem of a grapevine, or some other plant, bending it into the ground and then ensuring that it develops roots, allowing it to grow into a new offshoot, or a new grapevine. So, is there a relation between this “**grafting**” or “**cutting**” and being a “**blessing**” to all the families of the earth? With the Hebrew having the same root word, as we just saw; maybe the question we should ask is, “*What cutting, or grafting, will be the blessing to all the families of the earth?*” This where the ‘*And the souls that they made in Haran*’ comes in.

The sages explain that, according to the tradition, one of the things HaShem told Avraham was, “*I have two good cuttings which I will grow from you, Ruth the Moabite and Na'amah the Ammonite*”. Remember, that Torah tells us that Mo'ab and Ammon were both sons of Lot, by his daughters. As Lot was the son of Avraham's brother Haran, this gives all of them the same DNA makeup as Avraham. So indeed, these two cuttings came from the same vine. And, these cuttings were Ruth the Moabite and Na'amah the Ammonite; out of both of whom comes the House of David and the Mashiach. We know that Ruth the Moabite was the great grandmother of King David. And Na'amah the Ammonite was Solomon's wife, the mother of Rehab'am. And it is written that the Mashiach will be descendant from both of them. It's well known that the Mashiach is the son of David. But, it is also written that he will be the son of Solomon, from Na'amah. It also says, that of all the 1,000 wives of King Solomon, the only one that married him for the sake of Heaven and who was completely holy, was Na'amah the Ammonite. She was righteous.

Now, I want us to take a minute here and look at the place mentioned here, “**Haran**”, where Avram's father brought his family. Remember, Kena'an was his destination, But, he chose to stay in a place he named Haran. Haran is a very interesting place. It's Hebrew name “**Charan**” (*chet-reish-nun*) means “**crossroads**”. It's the place of “**decision**”, where there are consequences for the decision made. The numeric value of the letters is 258, which really supports this meaning. 258 equals “**ha gee' ran**” or “**the threshing floor**”, where the grain is loosened from the chaff; and “**ha ger' im**” or “**the sojourners**” and also “**a'charam**” meaning “**to be utterly destroyed**”, as well as “**v'eel barach**” meaning, “**and to bless**”. So, here Avram was “**called**” and he had a choice to make. HaShem does the same with each of us. When He “**calls**” us out, we have the same choice He gave to Avraham. Remember, He said to the Children of Israel in **Debarim / Deuteronomy 30:19-20**; “***I have called the heavens and the earth as witnesses today to you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore you shall choose life, so that you live, both you and your seed, to love YHVH your Elohim, to obey His voice, and to cling to Him – for He is your life and the length of your days – to dwell in the land which YHVH swore to your fathers, to Avraham, to Yitzaq, and to Ya'aqob, to give them.***”

OK, let's move on with **B'reshith / Genesis 12:4-7**; ***So Avram left, as YHVH had commanded him, and Lot went with him. And Avram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. And Avram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the beings whom they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Kena'an. And they came to the land of Kena'an. And Avram passed through the land to the place of Shekem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. At that time the Kena'anites were in the land. And YHVH appeared to Avram and said, “To your seed I give this land.” And he built there an altar to YHVH, who had appeared to him.***

It's very interesting to note here, that Avram was 75 years old at this point. 75 is the numeric value of the letters “*kaf-hey-nun*” in “**kohen**” or “**priest**”. And, 75 also equals “**batach**” or “**trust**”, as well as “**chokmah**” or “**wisdom**”.

So, after 75 years in Nimrod's kingdom, Avram in obedience sets out from "The Crossroads" for a new life, believing that Yah would do as He had said. They came to the "**Land of Kena'an**". Kena'an literally means "lowland" or "humble". We know from the geography of Israel that there are mountains. So, the implication here is that of being a "humble" land; or of learning humility in that place. Torah says that "**Avram passed through the land to the place of Shekem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh.**" Here we have two very interesting things. "**Shekem**", Strong's #7926/27, means "**upper back**" or "**shoulder**" and implies the carrying of a burden or the area that receives the lashing (*punishment*). The terebinth tree is actually the Hebrew word "**Elon**", Strong's #0436 and means "**great tree**" or "**mighty man**" and is a symbol of "**righteousness**". "**Moreh**" is Strong's word #4176 meaning "**teacher**". So, the place near, or opposite, the "**Shoulder (Shekem)**", the place of the "**burden**" and "**punishment**" (*remember Ephraim's burden and punishment*), the place of "**The Mighty Teacher**", is the first place Avram builds an altar to YHVH. Even today, our brother Yehudah calls this place, now a community, "**Elon Moreh**".

Next, Avram travels south into what would later be the inheritance of Binyamin, as **verse 8** tells us; **And from there he moved to the mountain east of Beyth El, and he pitched his tent, with Beyth El on the west and Ai on the east. And he built there an altar to YHVH, and called on the Name of YHVH.** Avram camps on a mountain between Beit El and Ai. This was a very interesting choice. Now it was here that Avram built a second altar to Elohim. Now, most English translations read that here he "**called on the Name of YHVH.**" But, according to the Stone Edition TaNaK and Gesenius' Hebrew - Chaldee Lexicon, the better translation of the Hebrew would read, "**and invoked the Name YHVH**". According to my dictionaries, "**invoke**" means; "**to call forth**", "**summon**", "**petition**" or "**appeal to**". So, Avram worshipped there and "**petitioned**" YHVH. We'll be reading in later Torah portions other amazing things that happened at this place, Beit El.

Now, **B'reshith / Genesis 12:9-13**; **And Avram set out, continuing toward the South. And a scarcity of food came to be in the land, and Avram went down to Mitsrayim to dwell there, for the scarcity of food was severe in the land. And it came to be, when he was close to entering Mitsrayim, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See, I know that you are a fair woman to look at. And it shall be, when the Mitsrites see you, that they shall say, 'This is his wife.' And they shall kill me, but let you live. Please say you are my sister, so that it shall be well with me for your sake, and my life be spared because of you."** These verses baffle most of us. After all, where was Avram's faith? What kind of person would suggest that his wife take part in this in order that he would be treated well and his life would be spared? Even more strange is that Sarai went along with this plan without a comment. She was not a passive person. Later she rebukes him regarding Hagar's treatment of her. Then she orders him to remove Yishma'el from their camp, after the birth of Yitzaq.

The Talmud teaches that, since Mitsrayim was a lawless and sinful society, this plan was the best way to insure favorable treatment for both of them. Avram knew that the Mitsrites would find her to be an exotic beauty and that the higher echelons of society would be willing to protect Avram on her account; which is exactly what happened with Pharaoh. History tells us that it was a custom in Egypt and other pagan nations not to take another man's wife. But, if he died by accidentally falling on someone's sword or spear, the woman would no longer be married and thus "*fair game*". Then of course, HaShem stepped in. Torah doesn't exactly say how Pharaoh found out that Sarai was Avram's wife. Perhaps Elohim paid Pharaoh a visit, maybe in a dream or vision; as He did with Abimelek, king of the Philistines. But, **verses 14-20** read; **And it came to be, when Avram came into Mitsrayim, that the Mitsrites saw the woman, that she was very fair. And Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her before Pharaoh, and the woman was taken to Pharaoh's**

house. And he treated Avram well for her sake, and he had sheep, and cattle, and male donkeys, and male and female servants, and female donkeys, and camels. But YHVH plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Avram's wife. And Pharaoh called Avram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not inform me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?" And so I was going to take her for my wife. Look, here is your wife, take her and go." And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him, and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had. Because of Avram's plan, he was spared and even given many "**lovely parting gifts**", as they were sent on their way back to Kena'an. One of those "**gifts**", according to the rabbis, was indeed lovely; a daughter of Pharaoh named Hagar, who was given to Sarai as a servant by him.

These events are very interesting in light of "**Ma'aseh Avot Siman Le'vanim**" or "**The deeds of the fathers are signposts to the children**"; especially when we consider "**historic precedent**". Think about it. There are several parallels between Avram's adventure in Mitzrayim and the later exile of B'nei Yisra'el in that land. Let's look at just a couple. It was a famine that drove Avram to go down to Egypt; and, a famine that causes Ya'aqob and his family to go down there as well. Avram understood that the Mitzrites might want to kill him and leave Sarai alive. Avram's belief is realized when Pharaoh decrees that all the male babies are to be drowned in the Nile and the infant girls are to be allowed to live. Elohim saves Sarai from Pharaoh's clutches by plaguing him and his household; just as He delivers B'nei Yisra'el from the clutches of a later Pharaoh through plagues, as they go free out of Egypt, by the ten plagues. Hmm, what might our deliverance look like?

Now, on to **Chapter 13:1-4**; *And Avram went up from Mitsrayim into the South, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him. And Avram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journey from the South as far as Beyth El, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beyth El and Ai, to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Avram called on the Name of YHVH.* HaShem blessed Avram's plan. He goes into Mitzrayim (meaning "**constriction**" and "**bondage**") to escape the famine and comes out with even greater wealth. It's interesting, again, that this was repeated when Ya'aqob went down into Mitzrayim to be delivered from the famine. At first, his family chose to stay there and then bondage came upon them. But, when HaShem sent Moshe to deliver them, they came out with great wealth. So, Avram returns to the place and the altar he previously built between Beth El and Ai; which today is called Har Avraham (*Mt. Abraham*). Here again, Avram invokes, or petitions the Name of YHVH.

Verses 5-13; *Now Lot, who went with Avram, also had flocks and herds and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Avram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. And at that time the Kena'anites and the Perizzites dwelt in the land. Then Avram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. Is not all the land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I go to the left." And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of the Yarden, that it was well watered everywhere – before YHVH destroyed Sedom and Amarah – like the garden of YHVH, like the land of Mitsrayim as you go toward Tso'ar. So Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Yarden, and Lot moved east. Thus they separated from each other, Avram dwelling in the land of Kena'an, and Lot dwelling in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent as far as Sedom. But the men of Sedom were evil and sinned before YHVH, exceedingly so.* Here Avram and Lot part company, as they had become too prosperous to dwell in the same

pastureland. The reference in verse seven to Kena'anites and Perizzites living in the land denote that it was an era of merchants (another meaning of the word *Kena'anites*) and those who lived in un-walled cities (*Perizzites*). Also, one of the draws for Lot moving to Sedom (*Sodom*) was that it too was a city of merchants and trade.

Verses 14-18; *And after Lot had separated from him, YHVH said to Avram, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land which you see I shall give to you and your seed forever. And I shall make your seed as the dust of the earth, so that, if a man could count the dust of the earth, then your seed also could be counted. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."* So Avram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to YHVH. Here HaShem promises Avram all the land that he can see from atop Har Avraham. Elohim also promises that Avram's seed would be as the "**dust of the earth**". He tells Avram to walk the length and breadth of this "*promised land*". In other words, "*try it on for size*". In order to really appreciate this gift, he needed to walk and inspect it and to really experience it from the chilly high country of the north to the heat of the Negev in the south; the ocean beaches in the west, to the Yarden River and Dead Sea to the east.

So, Avram moves his tent again, south to the terebinth trees of Mamre, or "**Elon Mamre**", which are in Hebron. Now this gets very interesting. As we noted earlier "**terebinth trees**" or "**Elon**" in Hebrew; remember, "**mighty tree**" or "**mighty man**" and is a picture of "**righteousness**". "**Mamre**" is Strong's #4471, meaning "**strength**" or "**fatness**" (**wealth**). You could say that "*Avram dwelt among the mighty men of strength*". Now "**Hebron**" is Strong's #2267 and means "**association**" or "**society**". OK, so you could say that *Avram lived among a society of mighty men of strength*. And Avram built an altar to YHVH there. Wow! Guess what? Remember, that after the children of Yisra'el returned to the Land and it was divided and each tribe took their inheritance. Yehoshua gave Hebron to Kaleb. Now Kaleb had to dispossess the inhabitants. Which he did in **Joshua 14:11-15**. Hebron was also called Qiryath Arba, as it is today. Qiryath Arba means "**City of Arba**". Now Arba, Scripture says, was the greatest among the **Anaqim** (*giants*) who lived in and around Hebron. These were the "**society of mighty men of strength**" that Avram dwelt among. And he built an altar there to YHVH. What a guy! There were giants in the land when Avram went to dwell there; just as there were in Yehoshua's time and just as there are in our time. Yah protected Avram and when the time was right, He fought for Kaleb and destroyed them. And, He will do the same for us.

Now, as we move on to **Chapter 14**, I'm including the meanings (in **black**) of the kings, peoples and places involved. I hope it will encourage you to finish this word study, as I believe there is a picture here of our history and the shadow of a war in Israel in the last days. You'll be getting these notes by e-mail. So, I hope you'll let me know what you find. Now, **B'reshith 14:1-24; *And it came to be in the days of Amraphel (Nimrod, Speaker of Commands) sovereign of Shin'ar (Babylon / Chaldee), Aryok (lion) sovereign of Ellasar (whom El chastens), Kedorla'omer (handful of sheaves = first-fruits) sovereign of Eylam (eternity), and Tid'al (great son) sovereign of Goyim (the nations), that they fought against Bera (son of evil) sovereign of Sedom (burning), Birsha (with iniquity) sovereign of Amorah (subversion), Shinab (splendor of the father) sovereign of Admah (the earth), Shem'eber (one opposed) sovereign of Tseboyim (beauty / honor), and the sovereign of Bela (destruction), that is Tso'ar (small or insignificant). All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (the plains), that is the Salt Sea. Twelve years they served Kedorla'omer (first-fruits), and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. And in the fourteenth year Kedorla'omer and the sovereigns that were with him came and smote the Repha'im (giants) in Ashteroth Qarnayim (star or mighty one with the two horns), and the Zuzim (abundance) in***

Ham (heat of the sun), and the Emites (terrors) in Shaveh Qiryathayim (cities of the plain), and the Horites (cave dwellers) in their mountain of Se'ir (Edom), as far as El Paran (El's cave), which is by the wilderness. And they turned back and came to En Mishpat (fountain of judgment), that is Qadesh (set apart), and smote all the country of the Amaleqites (ambushers), and also the Amorites (prideful boasters) who dwelt in Hatsetson Tamar (dividing the upright). And the sovereign of Sedom (burning), and the sovereign of Amorah (subversion), and the sovereign of Admah (the earth), and the sovereign of Tseboyim, (beauty / honor), and the sovereign of Bela (destruction), that is Tso'ar (small or insignificant), went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim (the plains), against Kedorla'omer (first-fruits) sovereign of Eylam (eternity), and Tid'al (great son) sovereign of Goyim (the nations), and Amraphel (speaker of commands) sovereign of Shin'ar (Babylon / Chaldee), and Aryok (lion) sovereign of Ellasar (whom El chastens) – four sovereigns against five. And the Valley of Siddim (the plains) had many tar pits. And the sovereigns of Sedom (burning) and Amorah (subversion) fled and fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. And they took all the goods of Sedom and Amorah, and all their food, and went away. And they took Lot (covering), Avram's (exalted father) brother's son who dwelt in Sedom, and his goods, and left. And one who had escaped came and informed Avram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees (mighty men) of Mamre (strength) the Amorite (boaster), brother of Eshkol (vine) and brother of Aner (youth), and they had a covenant with Avram (exalted father). And when Avram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan (the judge). And he and his servants divided against them by night, and smote them and pursued them as far as Hobah (hiding place), which is on the left of Damascus (silent sackcloth weaver or mourner). So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot (covering or veil) and his goods, as well as the women and the people. And after his return from the defeat of Kedorla'omer (first-fruits) and the sovereigns who were with him, the sovereign of Sedom (burning) came out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (equal), that is, the Sovereign's Valley. And Malkitsedeq (Melech Tzaddik or king of righteousness) sovereign of Shalem (peace / completeness) brought out bread and wine. Now he was the priest of the Most High El. And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Avram of the Most High El, Possessor of the heavens and earth. And blessed be the Most High El who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tenth of all. And the sovereign of Sedom said to Avram, "Give me the people, and take the goods for yourself." But Avram said to the sovereign of Sedom, "I have lifted my hand to YHVH, the Most High El, the Possessor of the heavens and earth, not to take a thread or a sandal strap or whatever is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Avram rich,' except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner (youth), Eshkol (the vine), and Mamre (strength). Let them take their portion."

Now, in **verse 14** Torah states; *"And when Avram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan."*, we have something very interesting. First, Avram, along with 318 servants of his own house and Eshkol, Aner and Mamre (*youthful vine of strength*) defeated and chased the armies of Shin'ar, Goyim, Eylam and Ellasar (*Babylon of the nations whom the eternal El chastens*). They chased them to Dan (*the judge*) and on to Hobah (*their hiding place*). And Avram brought back all the goods and the people. Let's keep in mind one other fact. Avram's senior servant was Eliezer, according to **chapters 15 and 24**. In fact, he was referred to in the Hebrew as Avram's "*ancient*" servant. Hmmm. Eliezer was sent in **chapter 24** to find a bride for Avram's son (*son of the exalted father*). He brought with him gifts for the bride. He's a picture of Ruach Ha Kodesh, who comes for Mashiach's bride, the redeemed. Why bring this up now? Well, Eliezer's

name has a numeric value of 318, same as the number of servants who went out with Avram to fetch Lot (the **covering**) and his family. Also, 318 is the numeric value of the beginning of **verse 16**; "**So he brought back**". Now some say that this means Eliezer alone was the 318 servants. But, I believe from this we see that Ruach HaKodesh was with them. In any event, Avram returned with Lot and all the captives, as well as all the "goods" taken in battle; of which he gives a tenth, a tithe, to **Malkitsedeq**, or **Melech Tzaddik**, meaning King of Righteousness, who was the **Sovereign of Shalem (King of Peace)**.

As Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum writes this week in his commentary on [Parsha Lech Lecha](#), "*In geopolitical terms, the war of the Four Kings against the Five (Genesis ch. 14) was a war for control over the blessed strip of land on the East Coast of the Mediterranean that is G-d's chosen, Promised Land. 'Amraphel King of Shin'ar' is Nimrod -- Ham's grandson and Abraham's implacable adversary. Ham is fighting Shem. What spurs Abraham into action is the capture of Lot -- a mortal threat to Lot's destined progeny, including Ruth the Moabite, grandmother of Mashiach. Abraham rouses his followers -- those he has educated -- namely Eliezer, Nimrod's own son, the rectified slave (Genesis 14:14, see Rashi there), and miraculously rescues Lot. In this way Noah's prophecy is fulfilled and Eliezer, the descendant of Ham, serves Abraham, descendant of Shem, in helping pave the way to Mashiach.*"

Rabbi Yossi Serebryanski adds a little more explanation in his article this week in his commentary in [Revealing the Soul / Lech Lecha](#), "*The land that later became known as Israel was given to Shem (son of Noah). That is why he lived there and is called the (Genesis 14:18) 'King of Shalem'. The original wall of Jerusalem was built by Shem son of Noah (Seder Hadorot). According to Jewish tradition Malki-Tzedek was Shem. He established a school there known as the school of Shem and Eber. (Genesis 10:22) Eylam was a son of Shem. (Genesis 14:1) Kedorla'omer, who was a descendant of Shem, was the King of Eylam. (Genesis 12:1) Abraham (a descendant of Shem) is promised land. Yet he is not told which land. Abraham travels and ends up in the land taken over by Kena'an. (Genesis chapter 14) Kedorla'omer and the other kings aligned with him fight a war against the people who were occupying their land. They win and take Abraham's nephew Lot, into captivity. From this, Abraham understands that he is supposed to acquire part of this land by war. Abraham releases his nephew by waging war against Kedorla'omer and the other Kings*".

Even here, twenty generations into His creation, HaShem gives the Land (*Eretz Israel*) to Shem and Ham conquers it. Avram is sent according to his calling to possess the land and give it to his seed forever. The adversary tries to defeat this plan almost immediately. First Sarai is taken by Pharaoh's men in an effort designed to stop, or pollute, Avram's progeny. You need to understand here that Sarai was the daughter of Avram's father, by a woman other than Avram's mother, according to **B'reshith 20:12**. Avram's line was to be pure Shemite (*Semitic*). Next, just in case Lot and his family were to be the heirs, the adversary had Lot taken captive to, hopefully, never to be seen again. How many times has this pattern been repeated? Ever since the *beginning* and it is still being acted out in world politics. Only now, it's not just the countries of the north, it comes from all directions. And with Yehudah back in the Land, it never stops. In **Zekaryah 12:2-3**, HaShem declares; "**See, I am making Yerushalayim a cup of reeling to all the people all around, and also against Yehudah it is in the siege against Yerushalayim. And in that day it shall be that I make Yerushalayim a very heavy stone for all peoples – all lifting it are severely injured. And all the nations of the earth shall be gathered against it.**"

Now, in **B'reshith / Genesis 15 ~ 17**, HaShem makes the covenant for the Land with Avram and gives the "**sign**" of that covenant, the circumcision, for Avram and all his house, forever. Rabbi

Greenbaum reminds us that, “*The commandment of circumcision is not one of the universal commandments of the Torah, but rather the exclusive mark and sign of the Children of Israel. The descendants of Yishma’el consider themselves bound by the commandment of circumcision, but they do not perform the P’RIYAH (peeling of the membrane) as practiced by the descendants of Jacob*”. For more information on the two procedures of Hebrew circumcision, please read the following article at: [The Covenant Land](#).

Here too, HaShem gives Avram a new name; **Avraham**; which literally means, “**Father of multitudes**” and implies, “**Father of nations**”. HaShem also gives Sarai the new name of Sarah. Then, YHVH gives Avraham the “**promise**” of Yitzaq, even though in the flesh, Avraham had brought forth Yishma’el through Hagar, Sarah’s servant. Yitzaq becomes the “**child of the promise**” as Yah tells Avraham in **B’reshith / Genesis 17:19-21**; ***And Elohim said, “No, Sarah your wife is truly bearing a son to you, and you shall call his name Yitzaq. And I shall establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Yishma’el, I have heard you. See, I shall bless him, and shall make him bear fruit, and greatly increase him. He is to bring forth twelve princes, and I shall make him a great nation. But My covenant I establish with Yitzaq, whom Sarah is to bear to you at this set time next year.”***

As we study the lives of the Patriarchs, as we look to the signposts left for us by the Author of all things; let’s remember that this is indeed our story too. As we read from our Haftorah this week in **Yeshayahu / Isaiah 41:8-10**; ***“But you, Yisra’el, are My servant, Ya’aqob, whom I have chosen, the descendants of Avraham My friend, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest parts, and said to You, ‘You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not rejected you. Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not look around, for I am your Elohim. I shall strengthen you, I shall also help you, I shall also uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness.’”***

And now, we stand where Avraham stood, at Haran, at the crossroads. The Author of all things has chosen us, and told us that He shall strengthen and help us.

Baruch HaShem YHVH!