

Session 248

Lech Lecha – The Journey to a New Israel Begins

2 November 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1X1dP43BLFg&t=4s>

Jeremy

Hey, shalom Fellowship, how are you? Can you hear me? Excellent! All right. I love seeing all of your beautiful faces, reading all the chats from all over the world. This Fellowship has been called together for these times. It's undeniable. And we are starting something new. There is a new time that's becoming upon us in the time, that's for sure. A new time is starting in Israel. There're now songs about the hostages that we just saw, such a touching song, so beautiful. And it's a new time for the world. And of course, in perfect timing, we start this new chapter in history, we begin learning about the stories of Abraham who started it all.

And in some ways, Avraham encapsulates it all. He's the heart of it all. And as you know, the first thing that Avraham is called is an ivri, a Hebrew. Hebrew, ivri, as we've said means "on the other side." The entire world was on one side, worshiping sticks and stones and idols. And Abraham said, "I'm not with you. I'm on the other side. All of you, the entire world is wrong, and I'll worship the true one Creator."

I mean imagine being the first rebel in history to say, "All of you, the entire world, all of you are wrong, and I'll be on the other side." And that's the first name given to Avraham, and that means that's the attribute, that ability to stand alone against the majority, the ability to go against the mainstream, the social pressures, is the first ingredient to enter into Abraham's tent.

And I want to share this video clip with you right now. It's a window into the future; it's a clip of the first Turning Point event since Charlie Kirk's murder. Vice President J.D. Vance was invited, and one of the students gets up and asks the Vice President a loaded fake question about Israel and the war in Gaza. And just watch because this is a sneak preview of what's to come. Check this out.

Student



I'm a Christian man, and I'm just confused why that there's this notion that we might owe Israel something, or that they're our greatest ally, or that we have to support this multi-hundred billion dollar foreign aid package to Israel to cover this, to quote Charlie Kirk, "Ethnic cleansing in Gaza."

I'm just confused at why this idea has come around, considering the fact that not only does their religion not agree with ours, but also openly supports the prosecution of ours.

Vice President Vance

Yeah, so let me say a few things about this. First of all, when the President of the United States says America first, that means that he pursues the interests of Americans first, that is our entire foreign policy. And that doesn't mean that you're not going to have alliances, that you're not going to work with other countries from time to time and that is what the President believes. Is that Israel, sometimes they have similar interests to the United States and we're going to work with them in that case. Sometimes they don't have similar interests to the United States. And this example, the most recent, the Gaza/Israel peace plan that all of us have been working on very hard for the past few weeks, the President of the United States could only get that peace deal done by actually being willing to apply leverage to the State of Israel.

Jeremy

All right, let me tell you, there are so many things that are troubling about that video. It's only a minute, but it's a window into the future of America. It sounds like the Vice President is saying that Israel isn't manipulating this President, saying that, "I don't know, other presidents maybe, but not this one." And that's not great, but also J.D. Vance doesn't outright clarify that Israel is not ethnically cleansing Gaza, that there was no genocide in Gaza. If Israel wanted to commit genocide, it would have flattened Gaza on October 8th. Instead, Israel lost almost 1,000 soldiers while doing targeted attacks, dropping notifications that all so called non-Chamas civilians would leave the area. Israel bled to ensure that only Chamas fighters and leaders would be targeted.

And the student said that the Jews in Israel are persecuting Christians? That wasn't pushed back by the Vice President either. Israel is the only country in the Middle East that the Christian population is actually growing, the only one. Jews and Christians may have theological differences, but Jews don't want to kill all of the Christians, so called infidel, as a part of the Islamic jihad. I mean to look at the world and see millions of people calling for the death of the Saturday people and then the death of the Sunday people and then blame the Jews for persecuting Christians is ludicrous. The fact that the Vice President doesn't call out the lies against Israel and the Jewish people, it's really troublesome.

But here's the thing that I really want to point out more than anything else. It wasn't the ridiculous question or the fact that the Vice President didn't address the false accusations that really struck me. It was the thunderous applause after the question attacking Israel from the audience. I mean, I would have expected the people to boo that kind of loaded anti-Israel

question. But instead, the entire theater, of thousands of young conservatives, they were American and they cheered and applauded that question. And so, the time is coming very soon, that people who stand with Israel will have to tap into their inner Abraham, into their inner Hebrew, their inner ivri and be willing to stand on the other side, against the entire theater applauding.

And I want to just show you the next clip. It's really troublesome. I saw this clip by Tucker Carlson, one of the most popular podcast in America, and he rips into Christians who love Israel. See this for yourself.

Tucker



How do you explain Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz, and there are a lot like that. John Bolton, I mean I've known them all. George W. Bush, like Karl Rove, I mean all people I know personally who I've seen be seized by this brain virus and they're not Jewish, most of them are self-described Christians. And then the Christian Zionists who are Christian Zionists, like what is that? I could say, for myself, I dislike them more than anybody because like...what?

Because it's Christian heresy and I'm offended by that as a Christian.

Jeremy

So, one of the most influential media personalities in America whose son works as the Deputy Press Secretary for Vice President Vance is saying that he despises Christian Zionists more than anyone else? He hates Christian lovers of Israel more than Islamic terrorists, more than the WOKE left or Antifa criminals burning down American cities? Why does he hate Christian Zionists so much? I mean, if you believe that God has a future with His people, Israel, and His promise to give the Land of Israel to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is everlasting. And that you should bless the Jewish people instead of cursing them. You're hated more than any other people on the planet? What is going on? This is by one of the most popular media personalities in America.

And so, friends, we are in the midst of a spiritual war. And in this war, Israel is destined to stand alone. That's Israel's destiny. And if you thought Israel would be able to hide in the Conservative movement or the Republican party, you'll see that both from the soon to be mayor of New York, Mamdani, and the WOKE left with him, and now the new WOKE right in the Republican party, the Jewish people will be singled out and Israel will be left alone, just like Abraham.

And the stage is being set for Israel to stand with the righteous among the nations in a showdown that is no less glorious than David against Goliath, where the odds are stacked up against us, and then the truth that God runs the world, the Bible is everlasting and truth will finally be revealed. And that's the reason Abraham is first called an ivri, the man who stands alone on the other side. Cause it started that way with him, and it will end that way with us.

And this Fellowship is the harbinger, it's the living testimony that there are people from around the world that choose to align with the destiny of Israel, who choose to read the Bible and live in a covenant relationship with God. The Christian world is being fractured now. The Jewish world, it's torn apart because very soon it won't be a Jewish thing or a Christian thing. It's going to be a God-thing. It's going to be an Abraham-thing. Abraham didn't have a religion. There was no theology set in stone in his time. The Torah wasn't given yet, he lived a guided life, guided by HaShem, in a relationship with HaShem. And that's exactly what we all need to strive for in these times. That's all we can hope for. And as all those who are living in a covenant with God come together, then a new people will be born. And so, with that, I want to kick off the Fellowship with a prayer now that we have all of us gathered here together.

HaShem, Master of the World, this week we begin again. We've come here together, Your Fellowship, to journey together. We walk together with Avraham as he sets out into the unknown following only Your voice in our times. And our prayer is simple. May his journey become our journey. Let the courage that filled his heart fill ours. Let his trust in You through every test and every mystery, awaken the same trust within us. May the blessing You gave him to be fulfilled through us in our lives and in our families. Let his chesed, his kindness, become our way of being in the world. Let his faithfulness become the foundation of our lives, and let his love for You become the fire in our souls.

HaShem, we're walking forward just like Avraham, not knowing all the answers, but knowing You are guiding us. May we hear Your call in our lives, and may we have the emunah to always obey. Bless everyone in this Fellowship and all of our loved ones. Bless everyone who are walking this path together, spreading Your light and love in the world. May we all come together soon as one extended family with You as our Father in Yerushalyim. Amen.

All right, friends, so before we dive into the Fellowship, I want to invite my best friend, my study partner, a man who is defending the Land of Israel in Judea as a part of the IDF in the Judean mountains, in these very days. He has a Torah perspective that I know will fill us with the light that only Ari can. So please, welcome Ari Abramowitz.

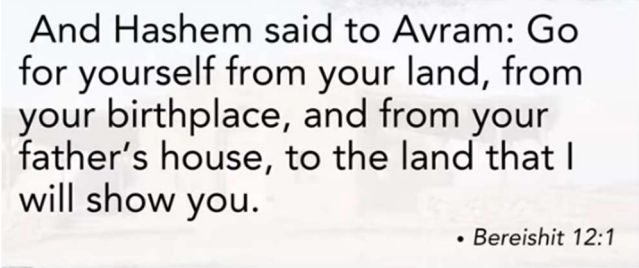
Ari

Hi everybody. So good to see all of you, so good to see all of you. You know, Jeremy, I'm listening to what he's talking about and Tucker Carlson is saying this, and the Vice President Vance and we're trying to figure out what's happening because that's a big part of really what we're doing in this Fellowship. We're looking within the words of the Torah, within the words of the prophets, looking at what's happening in the world today, we're connecting the dots, we're making sense of it from a deeper level, because we are living in times that can feel really truly bewildering. Every headline seems to contradict the last one. One moment there's a breakthrough, the next, another crisis. Nations shift alliances overnight, leaders rise and fall, and we're left wondering, "Where's all this heading? What's this all about?" Even me. I'm constantly looking to see and understand where HaShem is going with all of this. How his mission is being fulfilled. And often I feel like I see it perfectly. And often I feel like I have no idea where this is going.

And what I'm saying is that for those of us who really believe that HaShem runs the world, it can still feel hard and sometimes even feel impossible to see His Hand in what often feels like pure chaos. I mean, we see His Hand, we know it's His Hand, we know He's doing it, but it just feels like pure chaos for us to make sense of it. I always think back to the parting of the Sea. When they got to that Sea, I don't think any of them, that HaShem put in any of their minds, the possibility that that's what would happen. We're supposed to be in times that feel like pure chaos. And we're supposed to seek HaShem's Hand and understanding of what's happening.

Because you know when politics, wars, and tragedies dominate the news. When it seems like the wicked prosper and the righteous are suffering, we can start to ask the same, quiet question that Avraham, himself may have asked. If this is the Land of HaShem, why is it filled with famine, conflict, and uncertainty. Right? That's what he encountered right when he arrived at this Land that he was supposed to go to. If this is the story of redemption, why does it feel so messy?

Now I can't say for certain, that Avraham Avinu, that Avraham asked these questions, but everything I know about our forefathers tells me that their journeys were never smooth or obvious. They walked through confusion and doubt and that's precisely what makes their faith so powerful. It's why their stories give me strength in my own journey. If I thought they were perfect, they knew it all, they never had fear, they never had doubt, it's unrelatable. And that's why I believe in moments like these when we struggle to discern the Divine path through the fog of history, that the Torah gives us these stories of our forefathers, the stories of Avraham Avinu because his journey is not just the beginning of our nation's story, it's a roadmap for how to see HaShem's Hand when the world looks like it's spinning out of control.



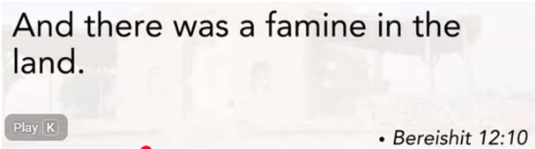
And Hashem said to Avram: Go for yourself from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you.

• Bereishit 12:1

Avraham Avinu is called not just to travel, but to transform. HaShem sends him to the Land of Promise to begin a revolution, to begin a nation that would embody his Presence in the world, leaving everything familiar, leaving his land, his family, his

culture. Avraham steps into the great unknown, guided only by faith and the Voice of HaShem.

But when he arrives, the Promised Land looks nothing like Paradise.



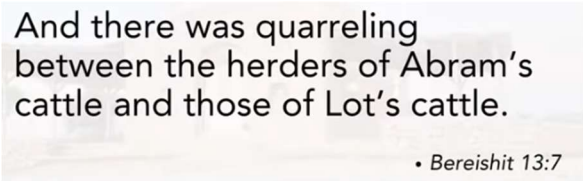
And there was a famine in the land.

Play K

• Bereishit 12:10

The soil of prophecy is barren. Right? This Land that flows with milk and honey offers hunger instead of abundance. Avram is forced to leave the very Land HaShem sent him to, seeking food in Egypt. And

when he returns, he faces more heartbreak, conflict with his nephew, Lot, the one family member who he had on his journey, he's having conflict with.

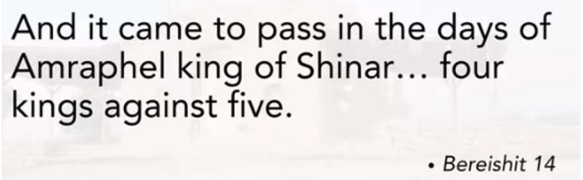


And there was quarreling between the herders of Abram's cattle and those of Lot's cattle.

• Bereishit 13:7

Lot departs for Sodom, leaving Avraham still childless, utterly alone. This promise of a nation, he thought it was going to be through Lot, and now it's just silence.

Rav Moshe Tarragon points out that Avraham's arrival in the Land shatters any illusion that holiness guarantees ease. The Promised Land does not hand over blessing on a silver platter, it demands struggle and courage and faith in the face of contradiction. And then comes this great regional war.



And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar... four kings against five.

• Bereishit 14

For 25 years, the Land of Israel was torn by conflict. Armies rise and fall, empires battle over the same soil HaShem had promised. It's here, not in peace, but in war, but Avram's mission begins to unfold. When Lot was captured, Avram

could have said, "He made his choice," but he doesn't. He gathers his men, he pursues the kings, and he rescues his nephew. It's an act of courage and compassion. Avram's first great deed, not only as a believer, but as a bringer of peace. His victory ended the war that had ravaged the Land and in so doing, Avram begins to fulfill HaShem's promise.

I will bless those who bless you
And curse the one who curses
you; And all the families of the
earth Shall bless themselves by
you.

• Bereishit 12:3

So Rabbi Tarragon asks, “Why does the Torah give such detail?” The names of the kings, the locations of the battles, the geography of these far-off campaigns. It could have just said kings, why do we need to know all of that stuff. No word is wasted in the Torah.

And he says, “Because HaShem is teaching Avram and us that His promises are not suspended above history, but they’re woven through it. The wars of men are not outside His plan; they are the stage upon which His will unfolds. Avram learns that the Land of HaShem will always be a Land of tension. It will be enmeshed in geo-politics. The fulfillment of prophecy happens through the mechanisms of human power, not despite them. When HaShem appears to Avram in the brit bein habitarim, in the covenant of the pieces, he confirms this truth:

On that day Hashem made a
covenant with Abraham: “To your
descendants I have given this
land, from the river of Egypt to
the great river, the Euphrates...

• Bereishit 15:18

The message is clear. Even when the world seems ruled by kings and empires, HaShem’s covenant moves forward. Yes, it’s guided by an invisible Hand from above, but the Hand, this invisible Hand is the Hand of the King of Kings, Who keeps His promises.

So Rebbetzin Adina Shmidman, I was reading one of her Torahs over Shabbat, and she teaches that our Haftarah echoes this very truth, but in a more precise way. That the Haftarah, the portion that we read from the prophets was written and selected for us, right now, for our times. The Haftarah was taken from chapter 41 of the book of Isaiah. And in it we see that the nations of the world sense something is shifting, that HaShem is moving in history again, and they panic. Listen to this:

Each man helps his fellow, saying to his
fellow, “Take courage” The woodworker
encourages the smith; He who flattens
with the hammer [Encourages] him who
pounds the anvil. He says of the riveting,
“It is good!” And he fixes it with nails,
That it may not topple.

• Isaiah 41:6-7

Now the Malbim explains that this isn’t a scene of idol worship or idol making, but of frantic weapon making. Nations sense the Divine light approaching and scramble to prepare for battle. Even broken swords are patched together good enough for a world desperate to hold onto its

power and that’s what it’s about. They’re making these weapons, they’re running to make these weapons for that reason. Here the Malbim reveals something extraordinary. “When light rises, resistance to that light rises with it.” When Divine light is on the ascent, the world’s darkness rallies in fear. Nations forge alliances, armies arm themselves, and even broken swords are patched together. It’s a frenzy, it’s a frenzy, and it’s not a sign that HaShem is absent,

it's proof that He's approaching. The louder the nations become, the clearer the proof that HaShem is drawing near.

From Isaiah chapter 41, from this week's Torah portion.

Who has wrought and achieved this?
The One who announced the
generations from the start - I, God,
who was first And will be with the
last as well.

• Isaiah 41:4

The uproar of the nations is not the absence of God. It is the shadow cast by His advancing Presence. And so it is today. Here in Israel, the same drama plays out again. The Land of Israel is never simple. The headlines are filled with wars and alliances and ceasefires, negotiations. And yet,

behind every headline, beats the same pulse that guided Avram Avinu. The establishment of the State of Israel, the victories, and the tragedies, the modern wars, and the shifting global powers. All of it, like the wars of the four kings and the five are part of the same, exact, Divine choreography.

Really when I'm out in these mountains and I talk to HaShem, I'm cognizant of the fact that He was in these very places. Avram was in these very places that I'm talking to Him from. The same words, the same God. Look back, the Balfour Declaration, the UN vote of 1947, the British and the American alliances, they looked political. But each step was HaShem turning the gears of history. And even today, from the attack of October 7th, to the return of our hostages, these tangled negotiations between the nations, they are not random. They are threads in the Divine tapestry, stretching from Lech Lecha to our own generation.

And like Avraham, we must look past the surface and see HaShem's hidden Hand in the machinery of geo-politics. When the nations rage, when we see coalitions forming, weapons building, hatred rising, we must remember. This noise is not proof of darkness winning. It is the sound of light breaking through. While the nations are arrogantly reinforcing broken swords and fortifying their arsenals, we are reinforcing emunah, we are reinforcing faith. They act out of fear; we act out of faith. And when the world trembles, we stand firm, knowing that the same God Who called Avram to this Land, still guides our destiny today. King David said to fortify his own faith the same words we say:

Hashem, Lord of Hosts, is with
us; the God of Jacob is our
fortress.

• Psalm 46:8

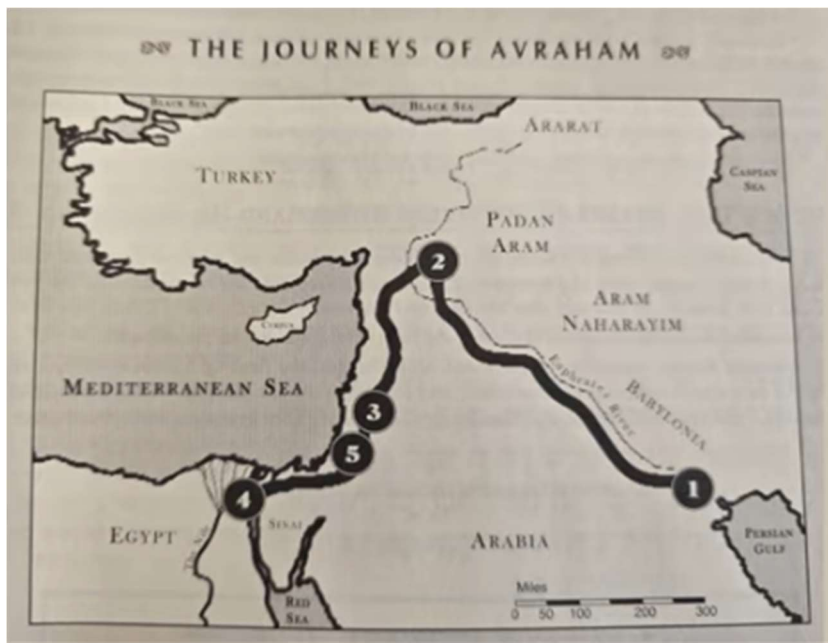
Our generation is walking the same road Avram walked, a journey of faith through uncertainty, of prophecy through politics, of light illuminating the chaos of history. And every time it seems like the world is arming itself against us, every time we see that happening, it means redemption is drawing closer.

So may we have the eyes, my friends, to see HaShem's Hand behind the headlines, the courage to stand firm amid the storm, and to know that even now, that HaShem is the first and He is the last and His story, the story of redemption is unfolding through us at this very moment. Love you guys. Back to you, Jeremy.

Jeremy

All right. Thank you very much, Ari. I think that that really is the secret sauce of this Fellowship. It is to be able to connect the dots of what we're learning in the Torah, what we're learning in the prophets, and then connecting it directly to what's going on here in the Land of Israel right now, what's going on in the world right now.

And so, I want to just take a small detour before I introduce Tehila because I want to talk about Abraham's journey and his journey through the Land and his journey through life, and how it's actually speaking to us right now. But I first want to point out something I noticed this week that I never noticed before. If you track Abraham's life through the journey from Ur Chasim, to Charan, to the Land of Israel, to Egypt, back to the Land again, you'll see something marvelous.



As you can see, it starts off at number 1. Number 1 is Ur Chasdim, and then he walks along the Euphrates River and arrives at Charan, which is number 2, which is right at the top there of the Mediterranean Sea eastward, then he goes down to number 3 in Sh'chem, where he builds an altar and is promised the Land of Israel. And then from 3 he goes to 4, he crosses the Sinai Desert and arrives in Egypt. And

then he returns to the Land of Israel and goes through Beit El and then he arrives at 5.

And what I saw this week, as I was studying the map is that actually Abraham walks out the borders of the Promised Land of Israel.



When you just read the words, you can't see it until you see the map. You'll see that it's true. He walked along the Euphrates River, up there, went through the Sinai, down to Egypt, turned back around, it is the outline of the Promised Land. His walk wasn't just a physical journey, it wasn't only a spiritual journey, it was the outline of the Promised Land that one day his children will inherit the Land and be sovereign over it and from that place, shine a light to the rest of the world. I just never realized that Abraham's journey, all the way back then from Ur Chasdim, to Charan, was actually mapping out the Promised Land. I just think that's so beautiful. Because of course you all know it's like God says, "Everywhere your foot steps..." But it's true. He literally was walking out the borders.

And so, every step that Abraham made was a biblical blueprint. His journey was prophecy. Just as God's spiritual covenant with Israel is the physical Land of Israel, so too Abraham's spiritual journey was actually a physical outline of the covenant with God. Everything is one, and that means that the spiritual can only be discovered through the physical. And in this case, it's a physical journey.

And so, what I want to do know, now that we've seen that marvelous map and how it's all coming together, I want to introduce my wonderful wife. She is spectacular. She's not only one of the smartest people I know, she's also one of the most righteous and the most beautiful and she's just amazing. We are just so lucky to have her here as a teacher in this Fellowship. And tonight, one hour after our Fellowship, at 8 p.m. Israel time, there will be a Women of Valor gathering where Tehila will delve into another biblical heroine and you don't want to miss Tehila and all of her wonderful team. It's like a pack, women that come together from all over the world. The Fellowship gathers together, woman power, and so that's tonight. You do not want to miss is, and so please welcome Tehila Gimpel.

Tehila

Hello everybody. Jeremy, you're not so bad either, you know? So great to see everybody. Ok, so guys, we are in the heart of these Avraham stories, as Jeremy said, these stories that are so amazing and I love them so much. We just finished Lech Lecha and we're moving into Vayeira, so we're like right in the stories of Avraham and there's so many aspects to look at when we look at Avraham. He's a religious revolutionary, he's the father of Isaac and Ishmael, but really the father of all of monotheism, he passes all of these tests. But something I think might be overlooked sometimes and was really distilled for me this year, is how much we can learn from Avraham as a husband. Jeremy, all of your nice words were in perfect timing, because I wanted to talk about relationships.

Avraham and Sarah were of course the original power couple with amazing connections. It's so clear from even the little bits and pieces of these stories that we have and you can just feel their love and their connection and they're on this journey together to bring the light of HaShem to the world. And I became kind of extra-receptive to their message and the concept of marriage and relationships because tonight in Women of Valor we're going to be studying Michal, the daughter of King Saul, the wife of King David, who for better or worse is often remembered for her big fight with David. That was like the last dramatic scene that we know about in her life was this big fight with David, ultimately leading, seemingly to her not having children, not having a continuation, for there not being this joining of the House of Saul and the House of David.

So today, in the women's group, we're going to dive really deep into marital communication, what we can learn from Michal and David, where they went wrong, so we can learn what to do right, where not to fall in our own lives. But in the study of that, there is something that I realized that's more general, which is that when we're studying the Bible, there are so many couples in the Bible, and we all know that being married is not always smooth sailing, but we don't hear a lot of stories of marital conflicts in the Bible, except for just a few times. When I say conflict, I mean like an actual back-and-forth. Not just somebody saying something that might annoy the other, like I'm sure when Eve heard Adam blaming her for giving him the fruit, she was probably like, "Oh, my gosh, I can't believe he's blaming me for that." But we don't actually hear an argument. I'm talking about an actual upsetness, with like not nice words being said to each other.

So, at least me, and I'm sure you guys might be able to think of other things I might miss, but I can only identify like three real stories of marital conflict in the Bible. You guys thinking about them? Try to like pick them up in your mind. We have Michal and David, famously. She tells him, "Ooh, the King out there dancing with everybody, so respectable," because he's dancing

with all the simple people. And then how does he respond? Well, he immediately pulls out the dead father card and says, "Well HaShem took the kingdom from your father and you don't like it when I humble myself? So you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to do it even more."

So, you know, so that's one conflict, that's pretty rough, and then going backward, let's say chronologically, we have the conflict between Jacob and Rachel when she says, "Bring me children or I'm just going to die." And then, what does he say, "Am I God that prevented you from having children? It's not like, I have children, God prevented you from having children."

And then, we have the conflicts between Sarah and Avraham on the status of Hagar and Yishmael in last week's parsha and this week's coming parsha. So there might be more, but these were the ones that I was able to think of. So now, I'm going to say a word to the gentlemen. The gentlemen in the group are going to like this. But the first thing...I don't love to admit it, but the first thing you might notice is that all of the arguments that we have in the Bible between husbands and wives, seem to be started by...and I'm not happy to admit this, but always started by the wives. All the husbands are just nodding like, "Yeah, of course, I know what that's about."

What else do we notice in those three stories? Again, I'm not happy to admit this, but each time, it seems that the claim of the wife against the husband, is kind of unjustified. In like the actual words that are being said, each time they seem to be blaming the husband for something he didn't actually do wrong. When Michal confronts David, I mean us as the readers, we know that it's beautiful that he's dancing before the Lord, that's wonderful. She's clearly like wrong to criticize that right?

And when Rachel says to Jacob, "Bring me children," I mean we as the readers know that he can't just magically abracadabra give her children. Clearly it's not his fault. And when Sarah says to Abraham, "I gave you my maidservant, and now she's being so disrespectful to me." She says, "My chamas is on you. I'm so angry at you that I'm calling you chamas." Like it doesn't actually get worse than that. I'm joking, but she's saying, "I'm so upset with you, this is your fault," but us as the readers, we know, how is this his fault? He didn't ask for Hagar.

In each case, seemingly the husband would have all the justification in the world to just lash back. But if you take a moment and look deeper, us as the readers, who are not emotionally involved in what's happening, can see that there's a little more going on here. Like if we look at Michal, we see this poor woman has been dragged around, used as a political pawn from here to there, waiting so much just for love and for someone to notice her. And then she sees David with so much love for HaShem, so much love for all of the people, and none left for her. She's

so lonely, her whole family is dead, she's an orphan, you can feel her pain. And that's like, she's not justified in the words, but you can feel the emotion behind the words.

Rachel, she knows that Jacob cannot give her children, but she's so sad from being barren and seeing her sister have so many children. She's screaming, "Help me." We the reader know that she knows that she doesn't think that he's going to magically give her children. But we the reader know what she wants. She wants support, she wants prayers, she wants him to see her pain.

So, on the face of it, husbands have every right to get mad for being blamed unfairly, right? Like it makes sense, but we as the observers see the pain behind the wives' words. And if the husbands would address the pain, it would save them so much heartache. Both David and Jacob strike back, right at the sensitive point of their wife. David reminding Michal of her family's downfall, Jacob reminding Rachel that HaShem didn't give children to you because I have children. And that just exacerbates the underlying pain. But we can understand them because it's so hard to have somebody blame you for something that's not your fault.

And this is where Avraham just turns out to be a giant. Sarah is blaming him for something that doesn't seem to be his fault. What does he do? Does he lash back? Does he say, "My fault, how is this my fault?" He could say something mean, he could say something hurtful, like, "You should have thought of that before you told me to take Hagar, and you know your personality's not so great, either. I'm not really a big fan of your parents." He hears her and he says to himself, "Ok, I could be defensive, but what does Sarah really need right now? What is she really saying when she's saying that it's my fault. Is there some way, that indirectly I have some kind of responsibility that I could take in this?"

We as the readers, we know exactly what Sarah means. She doesn't mean that Avraham did something, she just is like so humiliated. No children, her maidservant is treating her with all this sass. She doesn't feel like Avraham is helping her, like he's on her side. She doesn't know. Maybe he's kind of seeing Hagar as like the new lady of the home. She doesn't know whose team is he on. Avraham says to himself, "She doesn't know if I'm fundamentally backing her and loyal to her." So what does he say? He sees not the words, but the underlying emotion and her pain. What does she need? She needs my support and my backing. She doesn't need my insults when she's already down.

So what does he say? Nothing harsh, he says, "Ok, she's your maidservant? You have my full support and backing to discipline her as you see fit. I trust your judgment; you have my support."

And if you think it's just a one time thing that Avraham is like a hero in this department, I think we can look at this week's coming portion and see again when Sarah confronts him saying she doesn't want Yishmael to be around with Isaac, he doesn't lash back at her. He doesn't love it, he could say to her, "Oh, you're just jealous that I have two sons." He could say a million things. He pauses, he prays, he asks HaShem for guidance and then responds. Like it seems so simple, but as we can see from other biblical giants and heroes and I imagine from our own lives as well, it's really hard. It's hard to take that pause when somebody says something hurtful to us. Especially if it's untrue or unjustified.

But Avraham is giving these two keys to us for communication and marriage. And I don't think only in marriage. Communication in every relationship that are really the whole story. If we could internalize Avraham's lessons, I think it would reduce 90% of conflicts in our homes, in our extended families, in our communities. What does he do? He pauses. First thing is that he pauses, tries to hear what is really being said, not the accusations, but what is the pain. And to address the pain and not the accusation.

And the key number two that he gives us, he doesn't just pause, when he doesn't know how to answer, he prays. He turns his heart to HaShem and he says, "This is not necessarily something I see eye to eye on with my partner, but the main thing is not getting my will done. The main thing is getting HaShem's will done." So he orients himself to really hear the other person and orients his life and his decisions to be in HaShem's will and not his own will. And it's like in this combination, these two insights that he's giving us, even though they're seemingly like very simple, I think they're just amazing reminders of these incredibly powerful keys for just maintaining true peace and love and understanding in our relationships.

So bless us that we may all have peace in our homes and in all of our family relationships and with all of our other meaningful relationships in our lives in the light of our father, Abraham. Bye everybody, great to see you all.

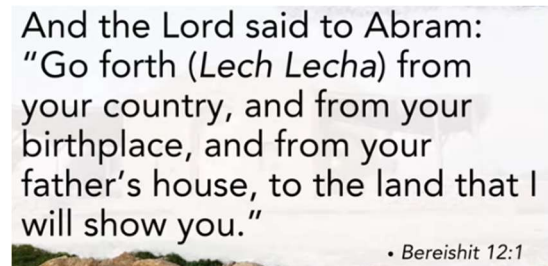
Jeremy

She's an expert, she knows how to fight guys, tell me about it. She knows how to fight. All right. So now, so let me tell you. We started off saying that it's really all about the Land of Israel. That is his journey, that's what Abraham did. And so now, what I really want to do, is I want to go deep into the actual journey of Abraham. Not just the map, but on his spiritual journey.

And first thing we need to point out is that Abraham is first called upon by HaShem in Parashat Lech Lecha. It's the first command given to the father of the people of Israel, the first Jew in the

world, the first Hebrew in the world, and the first command given to the first Hebrew is, “Move to the Land of Israel.”

And it is the first sentence from God to the father of every believer, we really need to pay attention because it’s the first thing we’re all being told. And so, the Lord said to Abraham:



And the Lord said to Abram:
“Go forth (*Lech Lecha*) from
your country, and from your
birthplace, and from your
father’s house, to the land that I
will show you.”
• Bereishit 12:1

And I think it’s important to point out, Avraham is the only person in the Bible that appears like that, on the scene without any context. Adam, for example, we’re told about his story, he was created in the image of God, God saw that He created man, it was good. Noah was righteous in his generation,

he found favor in the eyes of God. Moses, we know about the story, he’s born, the tevah, in the water, he grew up in Pharaoh’s palace, he stood up to the people when he saw an Egyptian beating a Jewish slave. Abraham, we’re just told, “Go forth to the Land that I will show you.” Why? What is going on there?

So the Sefat Emet says, “This was done to teach us that a calling from God went out and goes out to everyone in the world.”

And Avraham, as our father, was the only one in his time that was listening and acted upon it. That was his greatness. His ability to listen and obey. That’s why the Torah starts with Lech Lecha, because that was Abraham’s greatness. His openness to listening and his loyalty to obey. And that’s available for us today. I mean, how many people are open to that possibility? How many people are asking the question with an open inner ear, so we can hear an answer? That’s the first step, and that’s why Avraham is introduced to us in that way. Because it’s an opening for everyone.

If the Torah had a unique story, a particular background, it would exclude some people from identifying with him. “Oh, that’s an Abraham story. He came from here, oh, he did that? Oh, that’s just special for Abraham.” The first question, it’s that’s it. He was open and he got an answer. And so, here I want to talk about, there’s no context. Abraham’s story is true for every single person. But I also have a lot to say about the foundational command – lech lecha, go to yourself, from your country, from your birthplace, from your father’s house. I mean, there’s a lot there.

The first question is, when you tell someone to leave, you can just say, “Get out of town.” Why does it say, “Go and leave?” Like let’s say, you live in America. I can just command you, “Go to

the Land of Israel.” I don’t need to say, “Go to the Land I will show you. Leave the United States, leave Georgia, leave Atlanta, leave your father’s house on Peachtree Street.” I mean, it would just be enough to say, “Go to the Land of Israel.” All the other words are superfluous. Obviously, it means to leave the other places. So, something else is going on here. It’s not just about going; it’s actually about leaving everything else behind.

And so Abraham is being told a lot more than just leaving the Land. You have to leave your country, your birthplace and your father’s house. Every place that could have affected you – your world view, your personality, you have to leave it all behind. You have to start anew. Your country...I mean every country has a culture, has a vibe, every country has an impact on its citizens. Your community – that’s even a bigger impact. Your private school, your homeschool group, your congregation, your neighborhood. Leave your parent’s house – that’s probably the most impactful. I mean, your nature, your nurture, leave it all behind. To really get in touch with yourself, you have to leave all those external influences behind. Lech Lecha. Go to who you truly are.

And the more spiritual writings say that the verse is actually a code. Leave your land needs behind, leave your earthly desires and lusts behind. Leave your birthplace, leave behind all of your traits you were born with. Your emotions that you developed over time. Leave your father’s house is to leave all the habits you grew up with – your physical habits, your intellectual habits. I mean that’s a pretty high level to leave all that behind, leaving you totally disconnected. But that was the journey of Abraham.

So before we go deep into that, I want to point out something that you can really only see in the Hebrew. Lech Lecha is used in Abraham’s last test, when he was called to bring up Isaac as an offering. And if you don’t read the Hebrew, this insight will almost for sure be missed. Genesis chapter 22, verse 2:

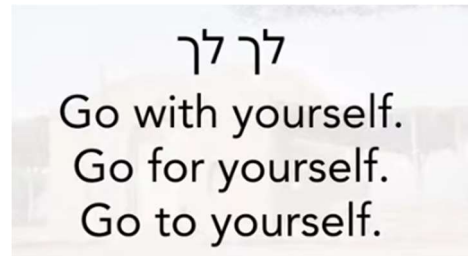
And He said, “Take now your son, your only one, whom you love—Isaac—and go forth (*Lech Lecha*) to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of.”

• Bereishit 22:2

Abraham’s first calling to the Land, “Lech lecha,” go to yourself. And Abraham’s last test, the binding of Isaac, Hebrew uses the same phrase, lech lecha. That calling lech lecha, go to yourself, it’s an echo throughout Abraham’s life. It was a calling throughout his entire life. That means it’s a calling

in our life, too.

So I want to dive into, what are the understanding of that phrase, lech lecha, because like I said, it's not just a call to Abraham, but a call to all of Abraham's followers. So lech lecha in Hebrew has a few possible translations.



And so, when it says, "Go with yourself," it's like don't leave yourself behind. HaShem tell Avraham, "Take your essence with you. You don't have to become someone else to serve Me. You don't need to erase who you are. I gave you that identity and that background on purpose."

The Midrash says that Abraham was likened to a perfume. Wherever he went, his sweet fragrance would spread. Go with yourself because you are a gift to the world. And you are the sweet fragrance that will spread. Who you are is more than what you would say. And in today's world, everyone says, "You have to conform to this religion, to this ideology, blend in, perform." HaShem is saying, "No, just bring yourself as you are. Bring your questions, bring your struggles, your personality. Let them be a part of your journey." The Land of Israel doesn't ask you to become someone that you're not. It asks you to become who you truly are. So bring your whole self. Go with yourself.

The next understanding is "go for yourself." That means, it's for you, it's for your own good. Rashi brings this down and he says, "Lech lecha, means this journey is ultimately for your benefit, your growth, your destiny." At first it might feel like a sacrifice, leaving the comfort of your home, giving up what's familiar, but HaShem says, "Trust Me. You're not losing. You're stepping into a story that's much bigger than you could ever imagine."

Rashi explains lech lecha as for your good and for your pleasure. Whatever hardships or unknown you encounter, it's all for your good, to bring blessing into your life." The biggest blessings in your life come from the hardest decisions and from the times that you said yes, even when it wasn't obvious and easy. And so lech lecha, HaShem is saying, "Follow Me, it will be a blessing for you."

And the last interpretation. Go to yourself, find your truest essence. The Chassidic Masters say that it wasn't a journey through space. It's a journey to the soul. God is saying, "Lech lecha, go to yourself to the soul that I created, the you beneath the layers, the journey to become the person I created you to be."

How many of us are living versions of our lives that are shaped by the world, not by our purpose. And this journey about returning to who you really are, and there's really only one person, there's only one way to find that person. It's to walk with God into the purpose of your life. It's the Land, it's in the mission, it's in the risk of the journey that we meet our truest selves.

So lech lecha is the journey of every believer to go to yourself, to go for yourself, to go with yourself. Those words are the bookends that frame all of the stories of Abraham, from the first calling, to the last test of the binding of Isaac, lech lecha is right there. But here's the key. To yourself, for yourself, with yourself, it sounds very self-centered. The Torah isn't setting out a selfish, self-centered blueprint for people. The call to reveal yourself is connected directly to the call to go to the Land, to build a nation, to build God's kingdom. The very next verse says:

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great; **and you shall be a blessing.**

• Bereishit 12:2

You're going to build a great nation and you shall be a blessing. That's the secret to the Torah. The key to a Torah life, the reason Avraham is the father of all believers, you want to reveal your soul in the world? You want to become what God created you to be? You want to become all that you can be? You want to express your soul? That will only happen through a commitment to building God's Kingdom.

When you're committed to serving as a blessing to the world, only when you really give of yourself, to that purpose, can you really express all that you are. On that journey, to bless the world is when you'll find your soul. You'll express your soul in the world through being a blessing. And building up a nation in the Land of Israel.

And so, here's another question. How did Abraham know where to go? Now we understand lech lecha. We understand all the interpretations, we understand why it didn't have any context. But the question now is, "How did Abraham know to go left?" He could have turned right. He could have gone up, he could have gone down. God doesn't say. I mean He says, "Go to the Land that I will show you," and the Torah never says that God actually shows him. How did Abraham know to go to the Land of Israel? I mean if this is the blueprint for all of us to live a guided life, it's critical that we find the answer to this question. I mean how can we know? We have an instinct to act, but we don't know what direction. How did Abraham know which direction to walk?

And I think the answer is also hidden in the words, lech lecha, go to yourself. HaShem is saying, "Go inside yourself. I'll show you the way to the Land." So what does Avraham do? He doesn't

look for guidance from his country, or his culture around him, or his father's house. He goes inside himself for guidance. And if you look at the end of Parashat Noach, right before we're introduced to Abraham, it's told that Abraham's family leaves Ur Kasdim. Let's read it together:

And Terach took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, the wife of Abram his son; and they went forth with them from Ur Kasdim **to go into the land of Canaan**; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

• Bereishit 11:31

They were already on their way to the Land of Israel, they were on their way to the Land of Canaan. Abraham had to go inside himself and ask where to go. HaShem was teaching him, "You don't need a booming voice from heaven to guide you. Society won't tell you the will

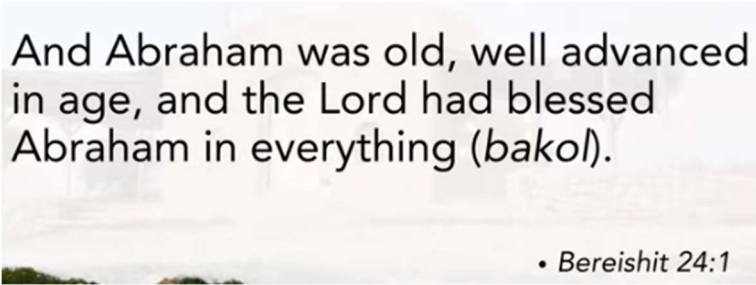
of God in your life. Go to yourself and inside you'll find an answer. HaShem is speaking to you right now."

He saw that He had intended to go to Canaan to begin with and stopped in Haran. So now, he decided to go inside and say, "Where was I going? I'm going to continue on the journey that God had already placed in his heart." I mean, Moses says to follow God is easy. He's not up in heaven, far off, it's not across this ocean. But it's actually close to your heart to do.

And so, Abraham was teaching us to live a guided life. The guidance comes from asking and listening inside you. Then the journey begins. Avraham arrives in the Land of Israel and there's a famine. He has to escape to Egypt, his wife is kidnapped, he's up against the tyranny of Pharaoh in Egypt, he comes back to the Land and his nephew is taken as a hostage and Abraham has to go out to war to save a hostage. I mean, does that sound familiar? Test after test, war after war, hostages.

I mean, you can see in this generation, the last generation of Mashiach, Israel is struggling after two years of war. There's been a famine in this Land for two years. I mean, we had to stand up against many Pharaohs, international tyrants. And we had hostages of war that we had to struggle and fight to release. And Israel is going through tests after test, quite literally mirroring Abraham's journey.

And the sages of Israel count ten tests to Abraham. But in truth, I see more than ten. They say that the last test was the binding of Isaac, but as soon as that happens, Sarah hears about the news in the next week's Torah portion and dies. That seems like test number 11. It sounds like he had a rough road from the very beginning. Abraham's life was test after test. But really, only the tests were recorded. Abraham lived many, many years in the Land of Israel. And look at what the Torah says toward the end of his life. Genesis chapter 24, verse 1:



And Abraham was old, well advanced in age, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in everything (*bakol*).

• Bereishit 24:1

B'kol. So we're told of all the challenges of Abraham, his tests, his obstacles. But there were many, many decades in the Land of Israel that he was blessed beyond measure. B'kol, in everything. In

his life he was blessed.

Today, the promise HaShem made to him has come to pass. His name has been made great in the world, he is a blessing to the world, providing the path for every believer, and God has made him the father of many nations. Probably the father of one third of the entire world. I mean every promise in the Torah given to Abraham has come to pass. And even in his lifetime, he was blessed with everything.

And perhaps, that's Abraham's final message to us. His life was not just history. His life was prophecy. He lived the life for all of us to follow. And so, Abraham appears without any introduction or any background because his journey is our journey. His journey is the journey of Israel. His journey is the journey of every believer that follows the path of Abraham. I mean, he walked the borders of the Promised Land of Israel. He was promised children, and he didn't have children until his late 80's. And he kept on going. And God said, he would be a blessing. And when he arrived in the Promised Land, a famine struck causing all of the idolaters of the Land to blame Abraham's presence for the lack of rain. And Abraham kept on walking.

Abraham was teaching all of his children that no matter what the challenge, keep on walking through war, and hostages. Abraham just kept on going in order to teach us that we would always keep on going. Trust in HaShem. Now, in our days, as Israel faces its own tests, we're also called to keep on walking, to keep on building, to keep on believing and to become a blessing to the world.

And so, with that, I would love to bless all of you from this place and from this Land. And then, I would love to open up and have just a small Fellowship Connection, that I would have a chance to speak and communicate just like Tehila said and offer you that opportunity. But first, I want to bless all of you with the priestly blessing from a priestly nation in the holy Land. And so...

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May HaShem bless you and guard you. May Hashem shine His countenance upon you and be gracious to you. May HaShem lift His countenance upon you and bless you with shalom.

