

## “Lech Lecha”

The third weekly portion in the annual Jewish cycle of Torah reading is from Genesis 12:1–17:27.

The fifth and sixth words in the parashah/portion is Lech-L'cha (לך-לך leḵ-ləḵā) – “go you forth.”

What led up to God calling Abram, the son of a pagan, to leave the prosperous city state of Ur (in modern day Iraq) to be the founder of a brand new family/tribe and nation in the uncivilized land of Canaan? In Genesis 12:1-3 we find out not only God’s plan for Abram but ultimately for you and me.

### Restoration of Relationship

In Genesis 1 man was in perfect harmony with God and men.

By Genesis 3 Man refused God's will **SIN BROUGHT SEPERATION...**

Man was separated from the **Place** called home - Eden

Cain was separated from his **People** - family

Man was separated from **Prosperity** with ease – now labored in sweat to survive life and in giving birth.

Man was separated from God’s **Purpose** to glorify and enjoy fellowship with his Creator.

Man was separated from the **Presence** of God in eternal death.

Eventually man’s atrocious, idolatrous, immoral sin brought the judgment of God in the flood.

But “Noah found grace” נָח - *chen* in the eyes of the Lord. “The language of Genesis 6:8 gives us insight into Noah’s character. “Found” is a simple active perfect verb, not a passive one. Thus, Noah found favor—grace—in God’s eyes because he was actively looking for it.”<sup>1</sup> The seed of all humanity and the animal kingdom were preserved in Noah’s Ark. Once again man was united in fellowship and obedience to God. God christened this new beginning with a rainbow. Mankind multiplied and united to have a common purpose against God by building a godless society and attempting a way to heaven without God. Satan always seeks to unify mankind against God. The more unified our world becomes through technology, language, culture and travel the stronger secular humanism becomes against God. God seeks to separate a people that He saves from this rebellion and unify them to himself in Jesus the Messiah/Christ. God cursed their godless secular humanism with linguistic babble. Their unity against God dissolved into separate tongues, tribes, and eventually warring nations. They will unite under the Anti-Christ against a common enemy – God. The spirit of Anti-Christ is uniting against the people of God – Jews and Israel as well as the people of His Christ – Christians and the Church. Rejection of God and His people and His land Israel will become the common catalyst for world unity.

In Ur of Chaldea, the very place where there had been confusion of languages, God spoke in the language of heaven to Abram, announcing the solution to this sinful separation. God chose to revive in Abram what was lost in Adam. It was promised that through his nation of descendants mankind would be restored once again to God. Genesis 12:1-3

**God chose to redeem a sinner who would leave the “world,” and separate his life to reconcile separated sinners.**

### 1. SEPARATION of Abram

Told to leave his country, kinsmen, and father's house. Religion professor, Richard Sugarman said this phrase *Lech-L'cha*, translated as “Get thee out” can also be understood as “go out from yourself.”<sup>2</sup> Obviously, “from thy country,” and “from thy kindred,” involves self-denial. Abram chose God over self. Hebrews 11:13 “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

### 2. STEP OF FAITH of Abram The obedience of faith 12:4 “to a land I will show you”

Romans 4:18-21 “Who against hope believed in hope...And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” “Staggered not at the promise of God giving glory to God.” Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith *it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.icr.org/article/noah-found-grace>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/judaism/torah-portion/lecha-lecha-and-prayer-647471> By MICHAEL M. COHEN  
DECEMBER 29, 2020 12:12 *Levinas and the Torah: A Phenomenological Approach*

**3. THE SUPPLY of GOD** would bless him to reverse the curse that had resulted in man's separation from a place, people, prosperity, purpose and the presence of God.

**Five promises to restore the five things lost in man's fall** Twenty-five years later at age 99 and still childless, God changed his name: from Abram to Abraham - Father of many Nations – "My Covenant is with you." Genesis 17:4

**a. place** - a land

**b. people** - a seed

**c. prosperity** - blessing

**d. purpose** – blessed to be a blessing to all families on earth In Genesis 17:1-8 God reiterated the promise.

**e. presence of God** - God extended an Everlasting covenant through Isaac. Genesis 17:19

➤ In 1965 a psychologist named DeGroot was fascinated by the clearly superior play of expert chess masters compared to less accomplished players. Initially DeGroot believed that the experts could think of more possible moves and could think further ahead, thus exploiting the weaknesses of opponents. He had both masters and those less accomplished attempt to plan the next move in an actual game while they thought aloud. What do you think happened?

a. Did the masters think further ahead?

b. Did the masters plan more moves?

Contrary to DeGroot's hypothesis, the masters used neither of these strategies, but rather...

c. "their initial choice of moves seemed far superior to the others."

There is nothing to suggest that Abram was of a higher IQ than anyone else, but his very first move was excellent. It is a move that the majority of people get stuck on for their entire lives. A common expression used of one who is conceited is; "He's stuck on himself." Most people spend their lives stuck on themselves, spending all their plans, energy and money trying to impress themselves or worse spending money that they don't have to impress people they don't even know.

Before there can be a step of faith there must be a first move. The first move of all God's people of faith is the ...

**4. SURRENDER of Abram** Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, **Get thee out** of thy country.

**Didn't Jesus say something about "Leaving yourself?"** Matthew 10:37 -39 "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Luke 9:23 "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whomsoever will save his life shall lose it but whomsoever will lose his life for my sake, and the Gospel's the same shall save it." Mark 8:34 **God has to separate us from our self-centered plans to partner with Him to reconcile**

**people that are separated from Him into a relationship with Him, so that He can gather them to a place prepared for them.** He has guaranteed to prosper us on our way with the purpose of glorifying Him by sharing the blessing of the descendant of Abraham to bless all the families on the earth. "I will bless them that bless thee."

### Timeline in Abraham's Journey of Faith

**At 75 yrs. old Abraham responded to God's first command** Genesis 12:4

He obeyed God and left his homeland to follow God's leading.

Abram left Ur to Haran Syria, where his father Terah died. 11:32

God spoke to him again when he had obeyed. 12:7

He believed God's promise and worshiped God by building an altar. 12:8

He returned to the place of God's promise and prayed. 13:4

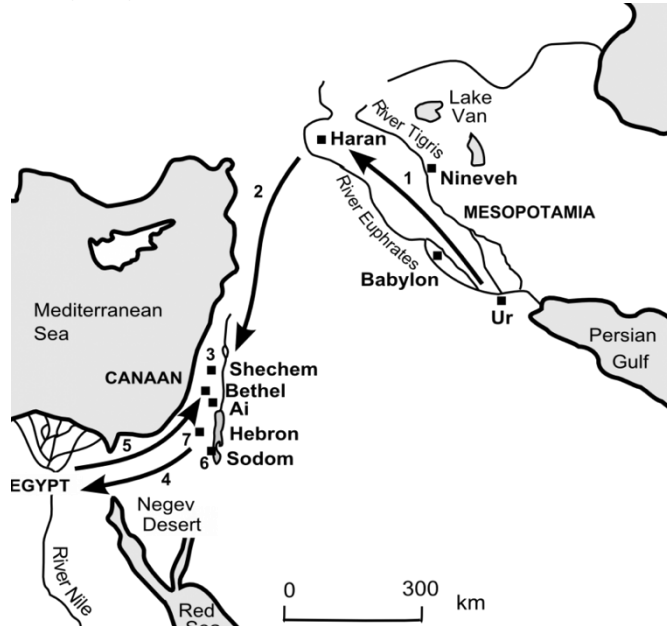
He allowed God to choose the best for Him. 13:9-18

Although Terah's "nativity"/birth/origin was Ur, it was likely that his ancestry was Syrian in Haran. Abraham's sons, Isaac and Jacob returned to Nahor of Mesopotamia, to "my country, my kindred" to the house of "Laban the Syrian." Genesis 25:50; 28:4; 31:20; 31:24

Abram was of Syrian descent. Isaac and Jacob's wives were of Syrian descent. Was Abram a gentile or a Jew? The origin of the term "Jew" appears only after Abraham's great-grandson Judah or *Yehuda*. "Jews" is first found in the Bible in 2 Kings chapter 16. "Jew" is first used in Esther 2:5. Technically Abram was not known as a Jew. "The English

term “Jew” originates in the Biblical Hebrew word *Yehudi*, meaning “from the Kingdom of Judah”. It passed into Greek as *Ioudaios* and Latin as *Iudaeus*, which evolved into the Old French *giu* after the letter “d” was dropped. A variety of related forms are found in early English from about the year 1000, including *Iudea*, *Gyu*, *Giu*, which eventually developed into the modern word. – Jew.”<sup>3</sup> In Deuteronomy 26:5 Moses said Abram was “A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous.” Abraham certainly is the Father of Israel and the Jews but the designation in his day was as an “Hebrew.”

“Not until Genesis 14:13 is Abram called “the Hebrew” עברי (*Ivrie*). The word “Hebrew” in the Hebrew language is עברי (*Ivrie*). The root letters are used to mean cross over, or pass through. Today in Israel, we can use the word to



talk about moving houses, transgressing laws, going through some difficulties, crossing the road, crossing over a river, and so on. Traversing, passing, or crossing over, essentially. In the Bible, it seems to have primarily referred to those who traversed rivers. The symbolic meaning of this should not be lost on us who love the Word of God!

It is speculated that Abraham earned the name “*Ivrie*”, or “One that has traversed” to be referring to the fact that he came from the other side of the river. He and his family had traveled from close to the river Euphrates, crossed over into Haran, and then God called him back over the river again to the land which we now know to be Israel. He also had an ancestor with that name (עבר – *Eber*, Genesis 11:14) which might explain the link...”<sup>4</sup> – (to Hebrew)

- 15:6 He believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness
- 15:9-18 He went to God for reassurance
- 15:18 He entered into a covenant with God

#### At 85 yrs. old he tried to help God out by his own reasoning and efforts.

Because of his refusal to wait on God and His way, we have the world’s oldest, worst conflict in the Middle East between Ishmael & Isaac and their descendants the Arabs and Jews.

#### How do we explain Abraham’s lapse in faith in light of later statements in scripture?

Romans 4:19-21 “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: **he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief**; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” Wasn’t the taking of Hagar for a wife staggering at the promise? That was when he was 85. The scripture clearly gives a time marker “about an hundred.” From age 99 on he wavered not in faith. He had faith to leave all and follow God, but later wavered in going to Egypt where he obtained Hagar.

#### At 99 yrs. old he responded to God’s grace and a second chance to do things right. 17:1,2

His name was changed to signify the human impossibility.

He was promised of God, to become not only a “father,” but “father of multitudes” 17:5

#### At 99 yrs old he laughed at God’s ability when told that Sarah would deliver. 17:17

He stopped laughing when God asked him to undergo a personal physical procedure. 17:24

Sarah laughed when she first heard the prophecy. 18:9-15

God pointed out that their laughter indicated a small view of His ability.

#### At 100 yrs old God got the last laugh when they gave birth. 18:9-15

God laughed with them and they named the child יִצְחָק (*Yitzhak*), Isaac meaning “laughter”

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew\\_\(word\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew_(word))

<sup>4</sup> One For Israel Devotion <https://www.oneforisrael.org/bible-based-teaching-from-israel/what-does-the-word-hebrew-mean/>

**What to do when we find ourselves at a staggering point in faith?** Matthew 6:33 & Romans 12:1,2 asks believers to give up everything, our lives for His plan. He promises an abundant life! But we see a lot of ways we think we can have a better life and there is a battle going on inside. We believe that we can live our life the way we want and be happy. We think we know what's best, but in the end we'll wind up disillusioned and we don't get a second life.

The devil walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. How does he devour our lives? By telling us, like he did Eve, that we know better than God what's best for us. He devours our lives one decision at a time as we begin to follow the imaginary "carrot" in front of us - the desire of our flesh, eyes, and the pride of a self-serving life. We spend all of our energy, time/life on... "All that is in the world passes away." I John 2:16

"Only one life will soon be past/only what's done for Christ will last."

What qualifies us to choose what's best for our life? How much experience have we had in completing a life? None, but Jesus has. We will never have God's best unless we surrender unconditionally. "*Lech lecha*" literally Go forth ourselves - leave ourselves.

As Winston Churchill said of Germany's surrender. "One splendid moment of surrender in our small life," makes all the difference. **But before there can be Separation, Steps of Faith and the Blessing of God's Supply There must be SALVATION.** Genesis 15:6

**5. Salvation of Abraham** He "believed in the LORD and it was accounted unto Him for righteousness." Jesus his greater son said, "I AM THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE AND NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME."

When Abraham surrendered the love of his life to God the Lord provided a substitute for our salvation. Genesis 22:1-12 Abraham obeyed, believed, worshiped, prayed, walked, feared and loved God and was blessed by God in all things. Abraham gave God a new title "*Jehovah Jireh*" – God will provide - Himself a lamb.

**6. Sending gospel witnesses with the blessing of Abraham.** "all families of the earth shall be blessed." Abraham pleaded with God for the salvation of Lot, his nephew's family. 18:22-33

Abram answered God's imperative "*Lech lecha*" & became the first cross cultural missionary.

Abraham offered His only son as a sacrifice foreshadowing God's only son as our sacrificial Lamb of God.

Jesus, God's Son answered the call "*Lech lecha*" and came to seek and save the lost sheep of Israel.

Jesus gave us the same imperative in the Great Commission first to His Jewish disciples then to us.

"*Lech lecha*" Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Matthew 28:19:20

### **Devotional thought from One For Israel Ministry**

"You can see why the Egyptians might have called them Hebrews – ones who came from beyond the river – and why Abraham was the ultimate Hebrew. As if to emphasize the point, the Hebrews went through not one but two rather miraculous water crossings; the first and most famous one being the parting of the Red Sea, but also when they finally reached their destination, the Jordan River piled up on either side as the priests set foot on the river bed, and the Hebrews crossed over on dry ground into their inheritance in the Promised Land. But what is wonderful about this passage in Joshua is that it lines up the idea of leaving behind a life of idol worship and crossing over into worshiping the One True God of Israel. Hundreds if not thousands of believers come from all over the world to be baptized in the River Jordan, but each one of us who has received forgiveness, thanks to the blood of the Messiah, has already crossed over from death to life – from darkness to light. We have left our old life "beyond the river" and gone through the other side, into a whole new life. (Baptism does not save but is a sign of a new inner life and leaving the old life behind – becoming separated to serve Him.)

We can intentionally put away the 'gods' that we used to serve – whether it was money, attention, success, validation, distraction... leaving all these 'gods' behind in the region beyond the River that we passed through, from death to eternal life. We have joined the *Ivrim* who have crossed over! Let's declare with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> One For Israel Devotion <https://www.oneforisrael.org/bible-based-teaching-from-israel/what-does-the-word-hebrew-mean/>

**Tabernacle Baptist Church** 11-27-16 Simms, NC

Trinity Baptist Church, VA. 3-7-17

Louden BT 11-20

JAM BS 9-17-21

#### One For Israel Devotion

<https://www.oneforisrael.org/bible-based-teaching-from-israel/what-does-the-word-hebrew-mean/>

Abram was called “Abraham the Hebrew” in Genesis 14:13, which is the first time that the word is used in the Bible. Where did this term come from, and what does it mean?

The word “Hebrew” in the Hebrew language is עברי (Ivrie). The root letters are used to mean cross over, or pass through. Today in Israel, we can use the word to talk about moving houses, transgressing laws, going through some difficulties, crossing the road, crossing over a river, and so on. Traversing, passing, or crossing over, essentially. In the Bible, it seems to have primarily referred to those who traversed rivers. The symbolic meaning of this should not be lost on us who love the Word of God!

It is speculated that Abraham earned the name “Ivrie”, or “One that has traversed” to be referring to the fact that he came from the other side of the river. He and his family had traveled from close to the river Euphrates, crossed over into Haran, and then God called him back over the river again to the land which we now know to be Israel. He also had an ancestor with that name (עבר – Eber, Gen. 11:14) which might explain the link, but either way, the association between these Hebrews (עברים – Ivrim, plural) and the crossing of rivers appears a few times in the Bible.

Joshua gives us this account of events and a clue to how the descendants of Jacob/Israel became known as Hebrews – Ivrim – those who had traversed:

*“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived **beyond the Euphrates**, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from **beyond the River** and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many... “Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and **you came to the sea**. And the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea... Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on **the other side of the Jordan**. They fought with you, and I gave them into your hand... “Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served **beyond the River** and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region **beyond the River**, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (verses from Joshua 24:3-15)*

As you can see, there are several mentions of watery crossings: Abraham coming from beyond the River Euphrates, the dramatic Red Sea crossing of the Exodus, and then the entry into the Promised Land as they crossed over the River Jordan. These Hebrews, these Ivrim, have sure done a fair amount of traversing! You can see why the Egyptians might have called them Hebrews – ones who came from beyond the river – and why Abraham was the ultimate Hebrew. As if to emphasise the point, the Hebrews went through not one but two rather miraculous water crossings; the first and most famous one being the parting of the Red Sea, but also when they finally reached their destination, the Jordan River piled up on either side as the priests set foot on the river bed, and the Hebrews crossed over on dry ground into their inheritance in the Promised Land. But what is wonderful about this passage in Joshua is that it lines up the idea of leaving behind a life of idol worship and crossing over into worshiping the One True God of Israel.

*“Put away the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”.*

For Joshua the symbolism was clear: on one side of the river is idol worship, but we have left that life behind when we crossed over to the other side. Now we will serve the Lord.

*The astute will notice that just as the blood of the Passover Lamb preceded going through the waters of the Red Sea, just as the blood sacrifice is offered on the altar outside the tabernacle before the priests come towards the Holy Place and wash themselves with the water of the giant laver, blood and water feature in our salvation in the same order: the blood of Yeshua and the water of baptism. When we come through the waters of baptism, we publicly declare that we are leaving our old lives behind, beyond the river, and are crossing over into a new life of serving God alone.*

Hundreds if not thousands of believers come from all over the world to be baptized in the River Jordan, but each one of us who has received forgiveness, thanks to the blood of the Messiah, has crossed over from death to life – from darkness to light. We have left our old life “beyond the river” and gone through the other side, into a whole new life.

We can intentionally put away the ‘gods’ that we used to serve – whether it was money, attention, success, validation, distraction... leaving all these ‘gods’ behind in the region beyond the River that we passed through, from death to eternal life. We have joined the Ivrim who have crossed over! Let’s declare with Joshua, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”.