

Binding Love: Abraham & Isaac

Parashat Vayeira ([B'reishit/Genesis 18-22](#)) 5783 B"H

Isaac: A Beloved son

If you are a parent, you know firsthand the eager anticipation and joy that comes with pregnancy and the birth of a child.

[Abraham and Sarah](#) had waited *decades* hoping for a child and finally reached the conclusion that they were too advanced in years to keep on hoping.

Sarah laughed when she heard the news she would have a son ([Genesis 18:12](#)).

She was 90 years old, can you really blame her?

According to [Genesis 17:17](#), centenarian Abraham also laughed.

And the child's name would be Yitzhak יִצְחָק (Isaac) meaning, *"he who laughs."*

After waiting that many years, this son was truly *beloved*.

Any child is so dearly loved, but can you imagine the depth of love these new elderly parents would have felt toward their precious child Isaac?

Abraham and Sarah had waited, *given up*, and then, by the grace of the Almighty One, received such an unexpected bundle of joy!

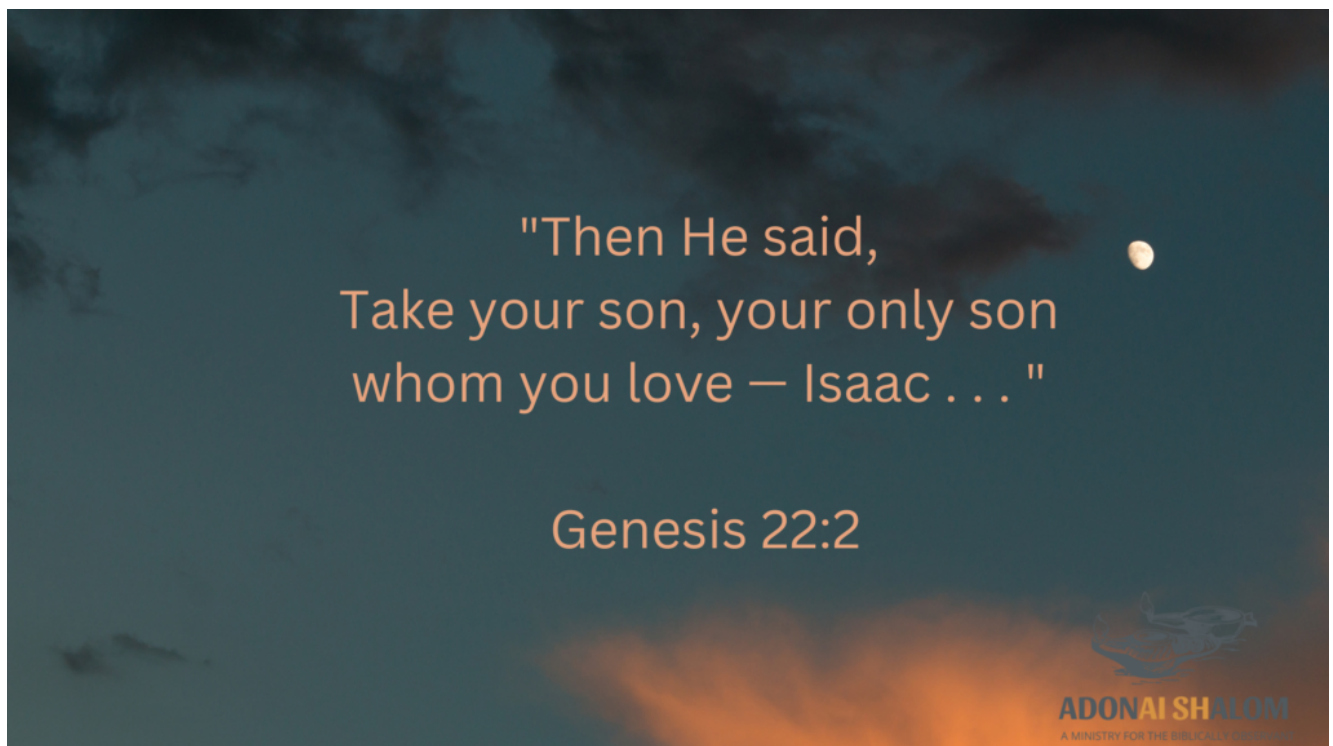
Messiah Yeshua (Jesus): our Heavenly Father's Beloved Son

Our Father in heaven sent His only begotten, beloved Son to earth.

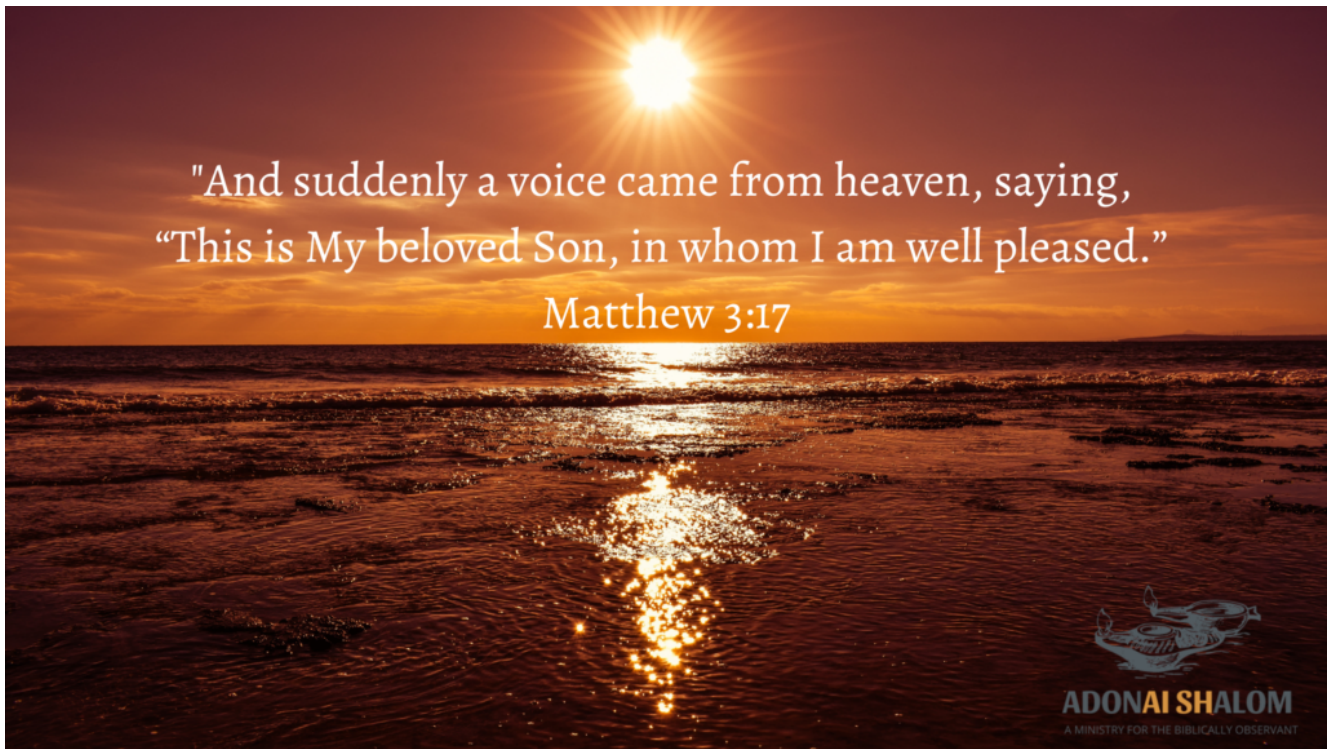
Yosef and Miryam (Joseph & Mary) were certainly surprised by the news that Mary would be the instrument through which Messiah would be born into this world.

There are many parallels between Abraham's son Isaac and our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus), God's Son:

"Then He said, Take your son, **your only son whom you love**—Isaac . . . " Genesis 22:2, *emphasis added*



"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is **My beloved Son**, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17, *emphasis added*



"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying,
"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:17

Aqedah אָקֵדָה “binding”

The binding up of Isaac to be sacrificed is known in Hebrew as the *aqedah* (*akedah/akeidah*), which literally means “*binding*.”

Abraham was commanded to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering.

Isaac’s father would bind him up and place the boy upon the altar, but before it got to that point, Isaac asked a pivotal question:

“. . . [Where is the lamb](#) . . . ?” [Genesis 22:7](#)



The binding up of a beloved son would demonstrate the greatest of all love: one day the Lamb of God Himself would be bound and beaten, sacrificed in our place.

Do you know the Lamb of God today?

Where is the Lamb in your life?

Have you allowed the LORD to rescue you from bondage?

Isaac survived because of the intervention of a divine Messenger ([Genesis 22:11](#)).

Abraham's son would be unbound: Isaac was set free, saved from a horrific death.

The first time the word “love” is found in Scripture

The word “love” is not used in Scripture until [Genesis 22:2](#). The first time “love” is mentioned in the Bible occurs in this verse about Isaac, Abraham's beloved son. It might surprise you that a word so central to our faith and to the unfolding

of salvation history wouldn't appear right from the outset, such as with Adam and Eve.

God's Word is truly remarkable. The depth of love that Abraham had for Isaac could be compared to the profound love the Father has for His Son.

[“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. Yes, he who had received the promises was offering up his one and only son– the one about whom it was said, “Through Isaac offspring shall be named for you.” He reasoned that God was able to raise him up even from the dead—and in a sense, he did receive him back from there.” Hebrews 11:17-19, emphases added](#)

Certainly the binding of Isaac prefigures the crucifixion: Abraham had the confidence that the LORD His Provider – YHVH *Yireh* – would not fail him. The [Hebrews text](#) above tells us that Abraham even reasoned that *resurrection* was possible. ADONAI had promised Abraham that he would be the [“father of many nations” \(Genesis 17:4\)](#), so by having faith in resurrection, Abraham could reconcile killing Isaac if he truly had to follow through with God's demand. Abraham's hope was that Isaac would be resurrected and continue the lineage, fathering many nations.

Abraham is a model of faith for every generation. He passed the test by maintaining unwavering trust in the LORD. Isaac's father knew God and loved God, and knew first-hand nothing is impossible with God ([Matthew 19:26](#); [Luke 1:37](#)). He had also come to learn that the God of Israel was merciful: Abraham had no reason to doubt God's provision. Yet even so, it is one thing to have the willingness to forfeit one's own life; indeed Abraham was even willing to sacrifice his own self – for what parent could kill their child without losing a part of their own self? The emotional pain would have consumed him, but there was nothing Abraham wasn't willing to do for His LORD. But sacrificing of self is not quite the same as sacrificing one's life entirely. And it is another thing

altogether to have the faith to end one's own child's life if so required. Jewish midrash discusses many instances when God's people have been in situations which required self-sacrifice, or situations in which parents have had to make the difficult decision to encourage their children to give up their lives rather than renounce their faith in the God of Israel.

Is *your* love for God that intense?

Are you truly willing to sacrifice *anything* for Him?

Do you live with this type of faith?

Do you have an unwavering confidence that no matter what, the LORD will see you through?

["Then He said, "Do not reach out your hand against the young man—do nothing to him at all. For now I know that you are one who fears God—you did not withhold your son, your only son, from Me.'" Genesis 22:12](#)

Our children are on loan to us from the Holy One. We must entrust their well-being to the LORD, as He allows us to love and care for them.

Bound together in Love

Abraham loved his son. Surely, the events of the *aqedah* bound him and Isaac together with an even deeper love. The account of Abraham and Isaac (*Yitzhak*) should remind us today of the centrality of love. May we learn to reflect the virtue of Messiah's love to those who are still looking for the Lamb – to those who are bewildered and look all around them, but do not realize the nearness of their salvation.

["And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Colossians 3:14](#)

No matter what, always trust in our Loving Father who is full of compassion. He will provide for your every need, bind up the broken-hearted, and save you when you call upon His Name.

[“Then Abraham lifted up his eyes and behold, there was a ram, just caught in the thick bushes by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. Abraham named that place, ADONAI Yireh,—as it is said today, “On the mountain, ADONAI will provide.” Genesis 22:13-14](#)

The Binding of God’s Word

Have you bound God’s Word to your heart?

The first portion of the *Sh’ma* urges us to “bind” the Word of God to our hearts and hands; to walk in His ways at all times and to teach our children to do the same:

[“Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love ADONAI your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These words, which I am commanding you today, are to be on your heart. You are to teach them diligently to your children, and speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. **Bind them** as a sign on your hand, they are to be as frontlets between your eyes, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:4-9, emphasis added](#)

I encourage you today to seek the LORD and His Word. He is the God of Abraham and Isaac! Worship Him and praise Him for His all-encompassing love! Here are two worship songs that you may enjoy today. The first one is one of my all-time favorites: LORD God of Abraham by Paul Wilbur:

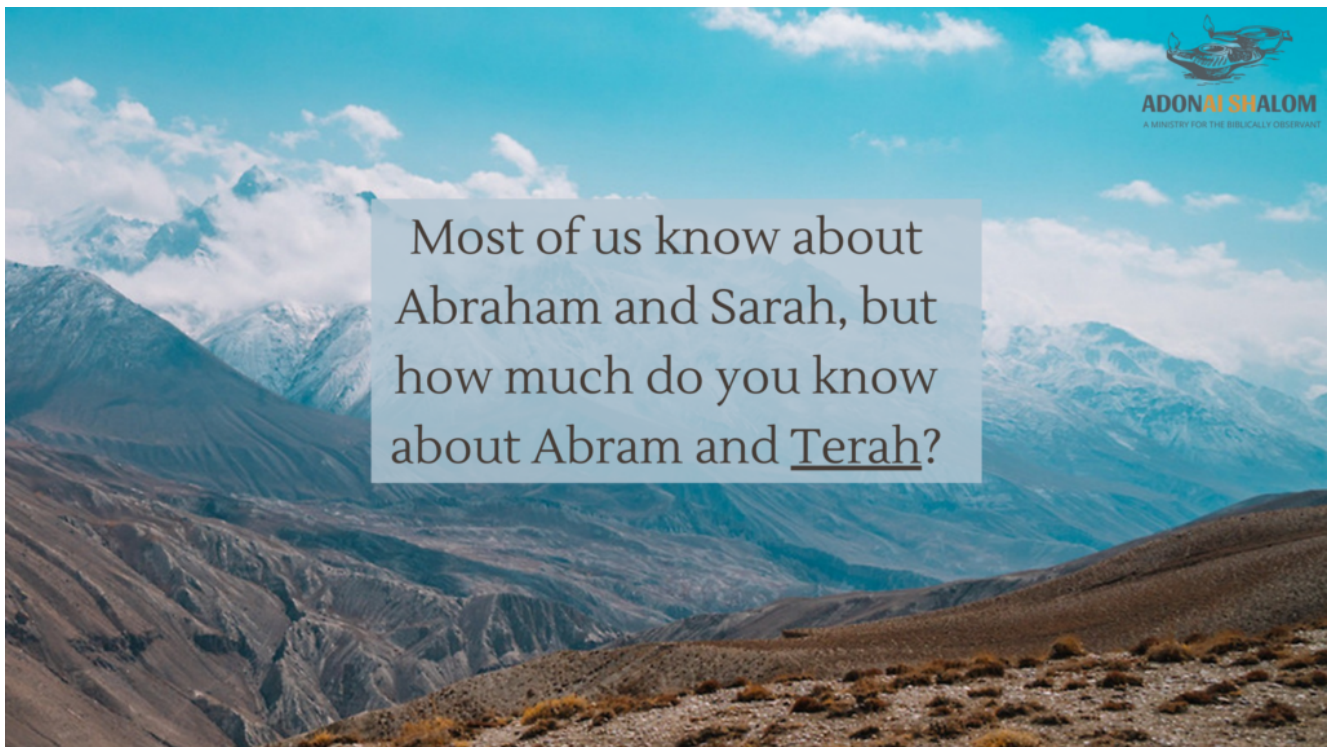
Shalom!

Please leave a comment below and let us know your thoughts! We love hearing from you, friends!

Led by the One True God: Abram & his father, Terah

Parashot Noach (B'reishit/[Genesis 6:9-11](#)) & Lech L'cha (B'reishit/[Genesis 12-17](#)) 5783 B"H

Most of us know about **Abraham and Sarah**, but how much do you know about **Abram and Terah**?



Abram's father, Terah

[Genesis 11:27-32](#) gives a genealogy leading up to Abram and Sarai, beginning with Terah, Abram's father.

Abram had two brothers, Nahor and Charan (often anglicized as

“Haran”), but Charan died. Charan was Lot’s father so he lived to be at least a young man, but he died before his own father Terah did.

They lived in a city called Ur, situated in Chaldean Mesopotamia.

Ur was known to be a prosperous place. The exact location is not definitive, but scholars find it reasonable to assume that Chaldea was located in the Fertile Crescent and that Ur was likely situated at the river delta where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers came together to spill into the Persian Gulf.

The city of Ur would’ve provided Terah and his family the benefits of urban life.

They would have had easy access to markets and trade opportunities as well as close proximity to fishing.

Despite all of that, **Terah decided to leave it all behind.** [Genesis 11:31](#) tells us that the family left Ur with plans to reach Canaan.

Terah took his son, Abram, his daughter-in-law, Sarai, as well as Lot (his grandson) to Canaan. Scripture does not tell us why Nahor stayed behind nor why Terah decided to leave Ur.

Why Canaan?

If Terah had grown tired of the riotous idolatry rampant in the city of Ur, Canaan wouldn’t be a good place for relocation: Canaan was well-known for their plethora of gods.

You will find that sometimes Scripture leaves us with more questions than answers.

Was Terah a spiritual (albeit pagan) person, believing that the Canaanite gods could heal his broken heart after losing his son Charan?

Or similarly, was mourning the death of his son too unbearable – with all the memories associated with life in Ur – that Terah was simply seeking to move away, unconcerned with the Canaanite deities, just content to get away?

I don't think it is unreasonable to believe that God Himself put it in Terah's heart to leave Ur, preparing for the day when He would promise blessing to Terah's son, Abram.

Regardless of the reason, Terah set out for his new life in Canaan.

Terah settled in *Charan*

Terah reached a place that the Bible calls, "Charan," and stayed there.

So once again, we have more questions than answers:

Did Terah name this desert place, "Charan," in honor of his son?



Was this place known as "Charan" before he got there, and therefore felt an affinity to it?

Whatever the reason, Terah stayed there and later died there, never making it to Canaan.

Did grief interfere?

Mourning a loss can be debilitating, and if we are not careful to seek the LORD as we mourn, our grief can begin to interfere with our ability to move forward.

We do not necessarily need to move “on” as though we will forget our loved one.

But we do need to continue taking steps in this life, walking . . . even if just baby steps, to move *forward* into the plan and calling that God has for us, despite any of our difficult circumstances and sorrows.

I heard a rather **harsh** interpretation of this passage once. The preacher said Terah stopped at “good enough”: that Terah never got to the Promised Land because *he lacked vision*.

Some then would argue Terah not only settled in Charan, he *settled for* Charan.

This *could* be the case.

We all know people who seemingly cannot conceive of anything more than what they have already seen or experienced; people who are limited in their ambitions and dreams. [Proverbs 29:18](#) rightly warns, “Where there is no vision, the people perish...”

But **I am not convinced** that Terah was unambitious or lazy.

Sometimes grief can take on that appearance.

Given that Terah was 205 years old when he died, maybe he had some age-related health issues and didn’t feel like journeying all the way to Canaan.

The place called Charan was, in a sense, “good enough” for

Terah. It was just that – a good place of solace, far from the bustling noise of Ur. A good place to heal. A good place to emotionally move forward.



Scripture does not record a divine mandate given to Terah. Could it be that God was leading Terah to Canaan, just as He would lead Abram there? We don't know, but it would seem that if that were the case, Scripture would've recorded it.

What we do know is that Terah's action in leaving Ur paved the way for future generations to live in blessing.

In that quiet, remote place, Terah's son, Abram, was able to hear the voice of YHVH clearly.

Abram is called by the One, True God

If you look carefully at [Genesis 12:1](#), you will notice the use of the tetragrammaton (the Name of God: YHVH). [Genesis 12:1](#) says, [“Now the LORD had said to Abram:”](#)

The reason, “LORD” is in all caps there is because in the

Hebrew manuscript is found the most Holy Name of God: YHVH.

Why doesn't the text read, "Now *God* had said to Abram . . ." ?

Well, Scripture was not put together haphazardly. It was inspired by God Himself ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)), so it is orderly and cohesive. Everything you read in Scripture is there purposely. Purposefully.

So we should believe it is significant that YHVH makes Himself known to Abram; and it would seem to make sense that the reason the Divine Name is written in this verse is to make very clear that the God who was speaking to Abram is the One, True God rather than one of the Canaanite gods:

["For the LORD is the great God, and the great King above all gods." Psalm 95:3](#)



["For You, LORD, are Most High above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods." Psalm 97:9](#)

The LORD's Promises to Abram

"Now the LORD had said to Abram:

'Get out of your country,

From your family

And from your father's house,

To a land that I will show you.

I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you

And make your name great;

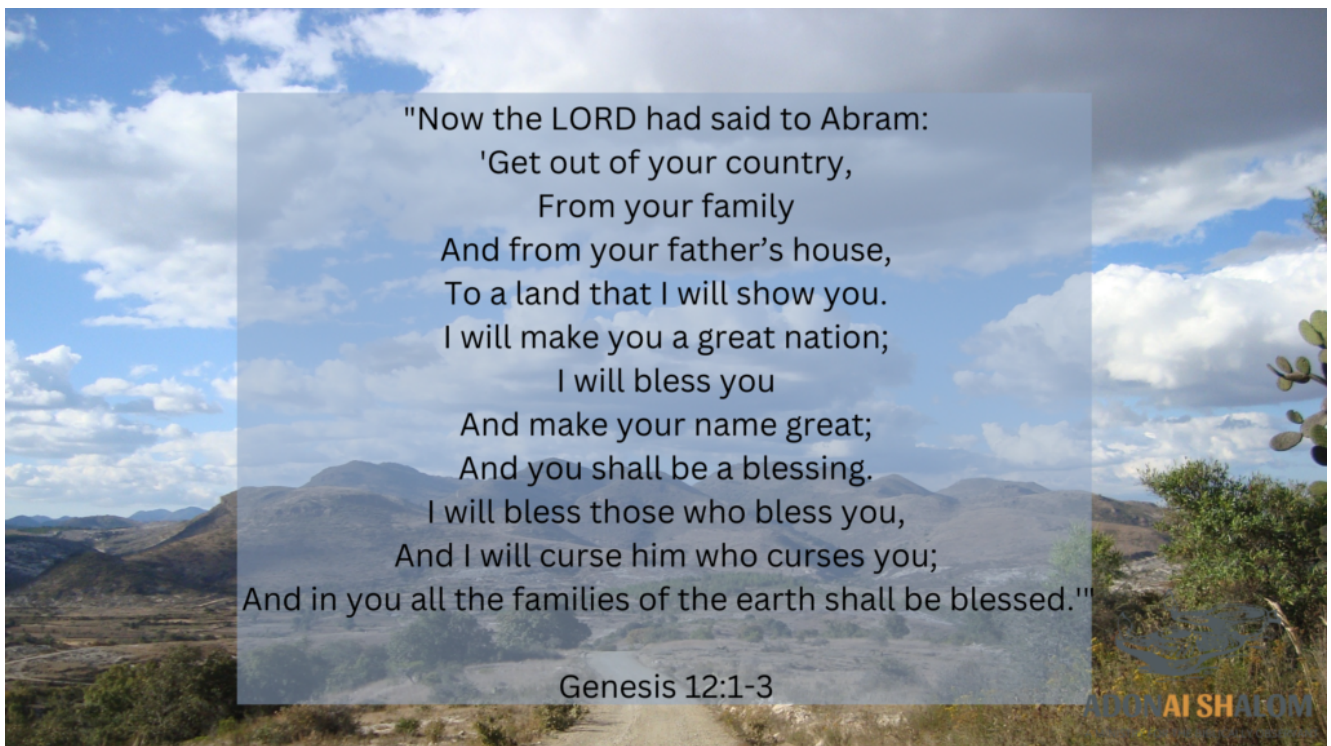
And you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

Genesis 12:1-3



This passage contains a 7-point covenant if you look closely.

God promises to Abram:

1. "I will make you a great nation" ([Genesis 12:2](#))
2. "I will bless you" ([Genesis 12:2](#))

3. "I will make your name great" ([Genesis 12:2](#))
4. "You shall be a blessing" ([Genesis 12:2](#))
5. "I will bless those who bless you" ([Genesis 12:3](#))
6. "I will curse those who curse you" ([Genesis 12:3](#))
7. "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" ([Genesis 12:3](#))

7 is the Biblical number for perfection or completeness. Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ) had not yet come to earth, so how can this be a perfect covenant?

Because the Author is Perfect and His Promises are Perfect!

What was required of Abram?

The promises required much of Abram, if you consider it.

He had to leave his country and his clan, and even his father's house, meaning he was to give up his leadership role as leading the family. Abram would've likely wrestled with the feeling that he was abandoning his responsibilities and obligations as the leader of his family's group now that his father was deceased.

Leaving family behind was really not something that was done in those days!

But when God is going to bless you, He requires that you're all in.

God required Abram to leave the life he knew.

The Bible records Abram acting in obedience, departing Haran with Sarai and Lot ([Genesis 12:4-5](#)).

Interestingly enough, Abram was not required to leave his *possessions* behind.

[Genesis 12:5](#) tells us Abram, Sarai, and Lot gathered all their possessions (including people they had "acquired.")

The evangelist in me really hopes those are people they had acquired for the cause of faith. Members of a pilgrim congregation.

But realistically speaking, it is apparent these people served as slaves. When we hear that term, we tend to immediately think of American slavery, which was horrific, violent, and completely unacceptable. We must hope that Abram and Sarai did their best to treat their servants well.

God had promised to prosper Abram, so Abram was permitted to take his possessions along with him on the journey to Canaan.

Have you left your old life behind?

Abram's calling to leave his old life behind should resonate with you if you follow the LORD.

If you have not yet made the decision to trust the LORD with all your heart for your salvation, let this be an invitation today.

Remember, Abram had grown up in Ur and had gotten married there. He was accustomed to idolatry and the worldly pleasures offered to him by the city. Chaldea was known for astrologers and fortunetellers.

Abram had willingly moved to Charan with his father, Terah. If he was old enough to remember his brother, Abram, too, probably did a lot of mourning. **He was an overcomer and a pioneer.**

Today's world is so very similar.

Idolatry and witchcraft have become mainstream.

Even many churches are participating in the devil's holiday this month.

What you and I are called to do is to be different.

The LORD asks us to bury our old lives.

Leave the past in the past.

Sometimes that does include our griefs. We need to surrender to the LORD and allow Him to heal our broken hearts.

So today, turn away – repent – of your sin, be baptized by immersion, and follow Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ).

[Allow the LORD to enter your life and ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit](#) (Ruach haKodesh) with the evidence of speaking in tongues ([Acts 2:4](#)). He will bless you and heal you, restore you, and prosper you, if you will walk in His ways. The Good News of the Gospel is for you and your family!

Be willing to leave everything behind, because if you do, you will gain eternity!

He will give you new life!

[“Therefore if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17](#)

Thanks for reading today! Please share any thoughts or comments below! I love to hear from you!