



Jewish Congregation of Marco Island

**A CLOSE LOOK AT TORAH**  
EXCERPT FROM THE WEEKLY PORTION  
October 16, 2021



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךָ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

**Torah Stats**

Weekly Portion: Lech L'cha  
Consists of: Genesis 12:1-17:27  
Sequence—



in annual Torah-reading cycle: 3<sup>rd</sup> of 54  
in the Book of Genesis: 3<sup>rd</sup> of 12

**- A Salient Selection from the Portion -**

Genesis 12:1-7

**Context:** *Genesis, first of the Five Books of the Torah, is an outline of the Creation of the physical universe; a description of the origin of the human family by their respective nations; and an account of Abraham's and Sarah's lineage through their grandson Jacob as the founder of the Israelite people.*

**Content:** *This week's portion launches Israelite history with an account of God's summons to Abraham. (Although, not yet being a Hebrew-speaking Canaanite, he is at the time still going by his original Aramaic name, Avram. Watch for the linguistic, cultural, psychological, and theological change-over in names coming up in 17:5 and 17:15).*

**A RUNNING START –** wrapping up last week's parashah, No'ach:

[11:27] Now these are the generations of Terach: Terach begot Avram, Nachor, and Charan, who begot Lot. [11:28] Charan died during the lifetime of his father Terach in his native land, at Ur of the Chaldeans.

[11:29] Avram and Nachor, in turn, had taken wives for themselves. The name of Avram's wife was Sarai, and that of Nachor was Milkah, daughter of Charan (who was father to both Milkah and Iskah). [11:30] But Sarai was infertile; she had no child.

[11:31] Terach took his son Avram; his grandson Lot, the son of Charan; and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Avram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go towards the land of Canaan.

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת תְּרַח תְּרַח הוֹלִיד  
אֶת-אַבְרָם אֶת-נָחוֹר וְאֶת-הָרָן  
וְהָרָן הוֹלִיד אֶת-לוֹט וַיָּמָת הָרָן  
עַל-פְּנֵי תְּרַח אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹלְדֹתוֹ  
בְּאוּר כַּשְׁדִּים

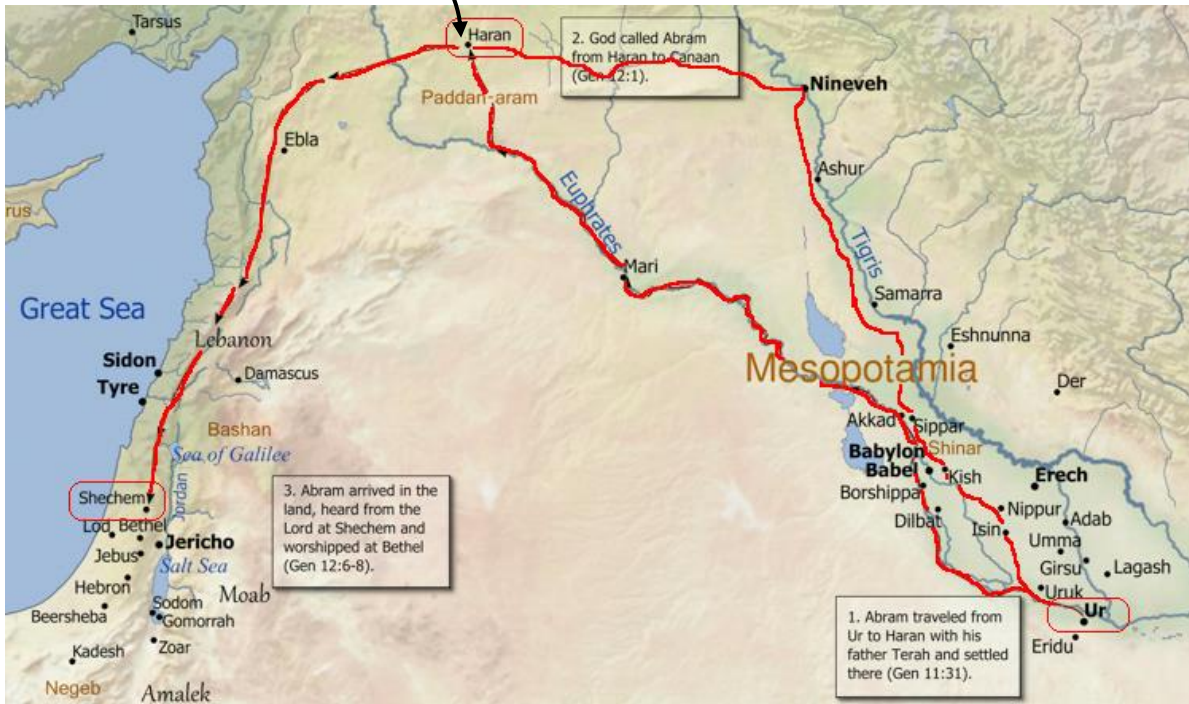
וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם וְנָחוֹר לָהֶם נָשִׁים  
שֵׁם אִשְׁת־אַבְרָם שָׂרַי וְשֵׁם אִשְׁת־  
נָחוֹר מִלְכָּה בַת-הָרָן אִבְי-מִלְכָּה  
וְאִבְי יִסְכָּה וַתְּהִי שָׂרַי עֲקָרָה אִין  
לָהּ וְלֹד

וַיִּקַּח תְּרַח אֶת-אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת-  
לוֹט בֶּן-הָרָן בֶּן-בְּנוֹ וְאֵת שָׂרַי כַּלְתּוֹ  
אִשְׁת־אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וַיֵּצְאוּ אֹתָם מֵאוּר  
כַּשְׁדִּים לָלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן

- more over

But having come only as far as Haran, they settled there. [11:32] Terach lived to be 205, and then he died in Haran.

וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-חָרָן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם וַיְהִיו יָמֵי-תֵרַח חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וּמֵאֵתַיִם שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת תֵּרַח בְּחָרָן



**PICKING UP** – beginning this week's *parashah*, *Lech L'cha*:

[12:1] The Eternal One said to Avram, “**Get yourself forth** from your native land and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you. [12:2] I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you; I will make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. [12:3] I will bless those who bless you, and curse any who curses you; all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you.”

[12:4] So Avram **went forth** as The Eternal One had commanded him, and Lot **went** with him. Avram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. [12:5a] Avram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the wealth that they had amassed, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran; **and they set out to go towards the land of Canaan.**

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִבְּיַת אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָךְ וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאַבְרָכְךָ וְאַגְדִּלְהָ שְׁמֶךָ וְהָיְהִי בְרָכָה וְאַבְרָכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמִקְלָלְךָ אָאֵר וְנִבְרָכוּ בְּךָ כָּל מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה

וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בֶּן-חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת-שָׂרִי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט בֶּן-אָחִיו וְאֶת-כָּל-רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת-הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר-עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן וַיָּצְאוּ לְלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן

[12:5b] **They reached** the land of Canaan,  
 [12:6] through which **Avram** passed as far as  
 the site of Shechem, at the terebinth of Mo-  
 reh. **The Canaanite was then in the land.**

**וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן יַעֲבֹר אַבְרָם  
 בְּאֶרֶץ עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֵם עַד אֵילֹן  
 מוֹרֵה וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אָז בְּאֶרֶץ**

אֵילֹן *eilon* = terebinth

*Pistacia terebinthus*  
 “turpentine tree”



[12:7] The Eternal One appeared to **Avram**  
 and declared: “**to your progeny have I as-  
 signed this land.**” So he built an altar there  
 to The Eternal One Who had appeared to him.

**וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר  
 לְזַרְעוֹ אֲתוֹן אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיִּבֶן  
 שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאָה אֵלָיו**

I) Separation As a Conceptual Theme in Genesis			
citation	element	distinguished	from
1:3	light	/	primordial darkness
1:6-7	finitude of the sky	/	the infinite cosmic ocean
1:9-10	dry land	/	waters of the sea
2:24	a man	/	his family of origin
5:3	lineage of humanity	/	Kayin the murderer
10:21ff	the Semites	/	the other Noahide nations
12:4	Avram / Abraham	/	the other Semites

II) Postponed Aspirations: a Thematic Model in Scripture	
Terach (and his family) - 11:31	Abraham (and his family) - 12:5
<p><b>וַיֵּצְאוּ אִתָּם מֵאוּר כַּשְׁדִּים לְלֶכֶת                      אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן</b></p> <p><b>They set out</b> from Ur of the Chaldeans                      to go <b>towards the land of Canaan;</b></p> <p><b>וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-חָרָן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם</b>  <b>but, having come</b> only as far as Haran,                      they settled there.</p>	<p><b>וַיֵּצְאוּ לְלֶכֶת אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן</b></p> <p><b>They set out</b> [from Haran] to go <b>towards                      the land of Canaan,</b></p> <p><b>וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן</b>  <b>and they reached</b> the land of Canaan.</p>

- more over

More “Delayed-Gratification”

(Genesis 12:7)

לְזַרְעֶךָ אֶתְּנוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ

To your progeny **have I assigned\*** this land.

\* literally, “I will give.”

(Genesis 15:13, 15:16)

יָדַע יַדְעָה כִּי-גֵר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ  
לֹא לָהֶם וְעַבְדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע  
מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה

You are to know of a surety that your progeny will be foreigners in a land **not their own**, where they will enslave them and persecute them four hundred years.

וְדוֹר רְבִיעִי יָשׁוּבוּ הֵנָּה כִּי לֹא-  
שָׁלֵם עוֹן הָאֱמֹרִי עַד-הֵנָּה

Only in the fourth generation will they return hither—for the sin of the Amorite is not yet complete.

in Egypt (Exodus 6:8-9)

וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר  
נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת-יְדֵי לְתֵת אֶתָּה לְאַבְרָהָם  
לְיִצְחָק וְלִיַּעֲקֹב

I will bring **you** into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

וְנָתַתִּי אֶתָּה לְכֶם מוֹרְשָׁה  
giving it **to you** as your possession.

at Paran (Numbers 14:31)

וְטַפְכֶם אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם לְבֹז יִהְיֶה  
As for your youngsters, whom you declared would be captives to your foes,

וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶתְּכֶם וְיָדַעְנוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ  
אֲשֶׁר מָאֲסַתֶּם בָּהּ

it is **them** that I shall bring into the land which you have spurned!

David (I Chronicles 22:7-8)

אֲנִי הָיָה עִם-לִבִּי לְבַנּוֹת בַּיִת לַשֵּׁם  
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי

I had wanted to build a House for the Name of The Eternal One, my God—

וְיָהִי עָלַי דְּבַר-יְהוָה לֵאמֹר לֹא-  
תִבְנֶה בַיִת לַשֵּׁם לְפָנַי כִּי דָמִים רַבִּים  
שָׁפַכְתָּ אֶרְצָה לְפָנַי

but the Word of The Eternal One came to me, declaring: “**You shall not build a House for My Name**, for you have shed much blood on the earth in My Sight.”

Solomon (I Kings 5:17-19)

וְעַתָּה הֵנִיחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי לִי מִסָּבִיב  
אִין שָׁטוֹן וְאִין פֶּגַע רָע וְהֵנִיחַ אִמֹר  
לְבַנּוֹת בַּיִת לַשֵּׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי

But now The Eternal One, my God, has given me respite from our foes all around, with neither enemy or evil at hand— **therefore, I intend now to build a House for the Name of The Eternal One**, my God.

- continued

Habbakuk 1:2

עד-אָנה יְהוָה שׁוּעֵתִי וְלֹא תִשְׁמָע  
How long, O Eternal One, shall I  
plead while You pay no heed;

אֲזַעַק אֶלֶיךָ חָמָס וְלֹא תוֹשִׁיעַ  
shall I cry out “violence!”, and You  
not rescue?

Jeremiah 29:10-11

כִּי לִפִּי מָלְאֵת לְבַבְךָ שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה  
אֶפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם  
Only when Babylon has fulfilled its  
seventy years will I take account of  
you,  
וְהִקְמַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הַטּוֹב  
לְהָשִׁיב אֶתְכֶם אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה  
לְכֶם אַחֲרַיִת וְתִקְוָה  
by fulfilling for you My promise of  
favor to bring you back to this place,  
to give you a hopeful future.

אתא לגבי אליהו אמר ליה מאי אמר לך

A) Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a - [Rabbi Joshua] returned to Elijah, who asked  
him: “What did the Messiah say to you?”

אמר ליה שלום עליך בר ליואי

He replied: “He said ‘peace be to you, son of Levi.’”

אמר ליה אבטחך לך ולאבוך לעלמא דאתי

[Elijah] told him: “He was thereby guaranteeing you a portion in The World To Come!”

אמר ליה שקורי קא שקר בי דאמר לי היום אתינא ולא אתא

But Joshua protested: “he lied to me, for he told me ‘I am coming today’— yet he did  
not come!”

אמר ליה הכי אמר לך היום אם-בְּקִלּוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ

[Elijah] answered him “He was telling you thusly: [it could be] ‘today— if you will heed  
My Voice’ [Psalm 95:7].”

- The Textual Conundrum -

Genesis 12:6 - וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אָז בְּאֶרֶץ

“The Canaanite was then in the land.”

וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אָז בְּאֶרֶץ רִמְזוּ לוֹ שְׁדוּר שְׁמִינִי יוֹרֵשׁ אֶת הָאָרֶץ

B) unattributed midrash - cited in S. A. Wertheimer *Batei Midrashot* 2 (1897), 6:16 -

“The Canaanite was **then** in the land” – [because the two letters forming the word “**then**”

**אֵז az**, *alef* and *zayin*, have respectively the numerical values of 1 and 7,] this is a **prophetic intimation that the eighth generation would take possession of the land.**

אברהם יצחק יעקב לוי קהת עמרם משה הרי שבעה דורות

Abraham; Isaac; Jacob; Levi; Q’hot; ‘Amram; and Moses are seven generations,

ויהושע מכניס שהוא שמיני

while Joshua, who entered [into the territory of the Canaanites to conquer it] is the eighth.

ויתכן שהזכיר הכתוב וְהִכְנַעְנִי אֶזְ בְּאֶרֶץ להורות על ענין הפרשה לומר כי אברם בא בארץ כנען ולא הראהו השם הארץ אשר יעדו

C) RaMBaN (Bonastruc da Porta, 1194-1270) - It is possible that Scripture mentions that “the Canaanite was **then** in the land” to teach us about the substance of this chapter—namely to indicate that Avram had arrived in the Land of Canaan, but **The Ineffable One had not yet shown him the land which had been promised.**

ועבר עד מקום שכם והכנעני הגוי המר והנמהר אז בארץ ואברם ירא ממנו ולכן לא בנה מזבח לה'

So he passed along to the place of Shechem, where dwelt “the Canaanite, a bitter and impetuous nation” [Habbakuk 1:6]. Avram was afraid of them, and so did not build there an altar to The Eternal One.

ובבואו במקום שכם באלון מורה נראה אליו השם ונתן לו הארץ וסרה יראתו כי כבר הובטח בארץ אשר אראך ואז בנה מזבח לה' לעבדו בפרהסיא

But once he came beyond Shechem to the terebinth of Moreh, The Ineffable One appeared to him and gave him the land. At that his former fear left him, for it had previously been promised “the land that I will show you” [Genesis 12:1]; **so it was then that he built an altar to The Eternal One** to worship God in openly in public.

D) Genesis 13:7 –

וַיְהִי-רִיב בֵּין רֹעֵי מִקְנֵה-אַבְרָם  
וּבֵין רֹעֵי מִקְנֵה-לוֹט

Now contention arose between the herdsmen of Avram and those of [his nephew] Lot.

וְהִכְנַעְנִי וְהַפְרִזִּי אֶזְ יָשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ  
And the Canaanites and Perizzites were **then** residing in the land.

E) OvadYah S'forno (1475-1550) -

היה הריב בין שני אחים גרים  
מבאיש את ריחם בעיני  
התושבים

Such a rift between foreign kinsmen sullied the reputation of Avram among the local residents.

כי בהיות מריבה בין האחים הגרים יחשבו אותם התושבים לאנשי ריב וישאו ק"ו בעצמם

Because of there being one dispute between two foreign kinsmen, the local residents would regard them as argumentative men who would be even more rude in dealing with outsiders.

F) Alexander Zusya Friedman (1897-1943), Avnei Ezel - It is due to the failure of parents to raise their young in the Torah and its observance that the Jewish people lost their home and foreigners settled on the soil of the Land of Israel.

That is the thought expressed in the verse “Now contention arose between the herdsmen of Avram and those of Lot.” **Whenever Jews cannot agree on the care and training of their offspring**— whether to follow the ways of Abraham, of whom it is written

לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה אֶת-בְּנָיו וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דְרָדְךָ יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת  
צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט

in order to command his children and his household after him to keep the way of

**Shabbat Lech L'cha – October 09, 2021 - page 7**

*The Eternal One, to do righteousness and justice* [Genesis 18:19];  
or the way of Lot, who was drawn to and went to live amongst the evil people of Sodom—  
**then “the Canaanites and the Perizzites” will dwell in the land.** So long as all Jews cannot concur that the only way is the way of Abraham, the land of Israel will be governed by alien peoples, since the Israelites themselves will be unworthy of living there.

<b>either...</b>		<b>or...</b>
Seth - father of humanity	↔	Kayin - vindictive fratricide
Shem - loyal son	↔	Cham - self-interested usurper
<b>Abraham</b> - faithful servant	↔	<b>Lot</b> - amoral opportunist
Isaac - dutiful son	↔	IshmaEil - bloody warrior
Jacob - patient builder	↔	Eisav - impulsive savage
Judah - initiative-taker	↔	Re'uven - indecisive waffler