

Lech Lecha
“Go Out”

Torah Reading: Genesis (Bereshit) 12:1 – 17:27
Haftarah Reading: Isaiah 40:27 – 41:16

Lesson Outline

1. Special People
2. Special Promises

The cast narrows

- In contrast with the vast genealogies recorded in Noach, Lech Lecha provides details about a few key, individuals
- They play a role in the history of Israel and also a major role in the unfolding revelation of the Messiah

Abraham – his faith

- Perhaps the most outstanding feature of Abraham is his faith and trust in God and His Word
- It was an incredible task to live his entire adult life on the basis of certain promise an unseen God had given him
- Hebrews 11:8-12 – “considered Him faithful who had made the promise

Abraham – was just human

- No advanced theological degrees
- Parents were not necessarily holy, God-fearing parents
- Lied about Sarai being his sister (Bereshit 12:10-20)
- Tried to jumpstart God’s promises with Hagar
- Let us not forget – God picks real people for His family and is looking for those who will believe Him

Hagar (Bereshit 16)

- Even though she is normally forgotten we can see that Hagar appears to have a relationship with the God of Abraham
- She prayed to Him, worshipped Him, and heard His voice
- She knew He speaks personally, sends ministering angels, and He aids and comforts His people.
- Ishmael – God kept His promise to make Abraham’s descendents into a great nation. God does not break His covenants.

Galatians 4:21-31

- Paul treats us to some Holy Spirit-guided symbolism from Bereshit 16
- Sarah and Hagar are used as pictures of the two covenants
- Justification is never through obedience to anything. God’s promises are always to be accepted by faith.
- Obeying the Law does not secure God’s promises any more than circumcision secured the promises for Abraham. It is faith and faith alone that secured the promises.

Melchizedek – The Mysterious Man

- Bereshit 14 could be removed from the story and the flow would not be hindered so there must be some very important reasons for including it.
- His name means “king of righteousness’
- He was a priest-king in the time of Abraham
- He worshipped the Most High God and Abraham tithed to him
- Beyond these facts we are left to speculation

Melchizedek – Psalm 110 and Hebrews 7

- “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” Psalm 110:4. This verse is used as a reference to Yeshua in Hebrews.
- Read Psalm 110 and Hebrews 7. Notice what is claimed about Melchizedek and the comparisons made.
- The two main possibilities are that God used him to establish a priesthood that Yeshua would ultimately fulfill or that he was a manifestation of God in human form.

Covenants – Bereshit 15

- Understanding Near Eastern covenants is very important to understanding scripture and how our relationship with God is possible
- Almost all covenants had a religious component. That God would be the witness to the promise of fidelity between the two parties. The promises were meant to be kept.
- Animals were usually slaughtered. This said “just as this animal is cut up, so may whoever breaks this covenant be cut up”. Thus the terms “blood covenant” and “to cut a covenant”.

God’s covenant with Abraham

- Since God is establishing the covenant, it is an unconditional covenant
- Since we see God alone passing through the animal pieces we know that God is taking the responsibility on Himself to keep the covenant. God would be keeping His promises no matter what happened.
- This is the case with Christ. Our faith in Him puts us in His life. It is up to Him to ‘keep us’ since we cannot ‘keep ourselves’.

Circumcision – The Sign

- Sometimes covenants are accompanied by an external sign or token to remind the parties of their obligations.
- Why this sign? God’s promises did not just concern Abraham they concerned his seed as well.
- Circumcision is an apt reminder as the vehicle for the transmission of the seed is the marker of the covenant.

El Shaddai

- One meaning is that God is the all-powerful one, the “Almighty”
- A second connotation is that this word might also be related to “breast”. If so, this would picture God nursing new children, continuing the promise.

Death, Birth and Severance – Deut. 30 and Colossians 2

- Circumcision of the heart
- When God circumcises those who trust Him for salvation, something dies,

something is born and something is severed.

- The “old man” dies (Romans 6), we are born new creations, and “the flesh” is circumcised from us.
- If the old man is dead then the only place where there is sin is ‘the flesh’.
- Sin no longer has the same relationship with us since it is separated from our new creation. Because of this and through the Holy Spirit we can truly say “No!” to sin since it is no longer intimately connected to us.