



MORDEKAI'S DRASH — LEKH L'KHA

Torah: *Lekh L'kha* (Get yourself out), *B'resheet* (Genesis) 12.1-17.27
Haftorah: *Yesha'yahu* (Isaiah) 40.27-41.16
Suggested *Messianic Writings* reading: Romans 4.1-25

Shalom,

It is disturbing how mankind generally seems resistant to learn from the past. Disobedience to the Creator cost man the joy of *Gan-Eden*; from there it went downhill, and the flood nearly wiped humanity from the face of the earth; yet even after that devastation man decided to build a tower at Babel and challenge the Creator as to who was “in charge”. Some of the sages wrote that since *ADONAI* had promised to never again destroy the earth by flood, these people probably misunderstood, thinking that there would be no more heavenly judgment or punishment. As our parashah begins this week, we read of a simple act of obedience by one man that changed the course of history and changed the direction of human destiny.

B'resheet 12.1,4 says, ‘Now *ADONAI* said to Avram, ‘Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you....’ So Avram went, as *ADONAI* had said to him.” The book of Hebrews amplifies this step of obedience, in 11.8-9a, “By faith Abraham *obeyed* when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And *he went out, not knowing where he was going*. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, *living in tents...*” (emphasis added).

There are many lessons to be learned from the life of Avram/Avraham. One thing is that we read in the life of Avraham of the many locations where he “pitched his tent”. A tent is pitched, or put up – a tent is not built; thus, a tent is only temporary housing. Sha’ul referenced this fact when he described our physical body as a tent, in 2 Corinthians 5. We see in the travels of Avraham that whenever he would stop to *pitch* his tent, he would *build* an altar to *ADONAI*. So even though living and moving about in a temporary home, Avraham built something solid in the Promised Land – altars to *ADONAI*, which through his faith became the foundation of a nation.

While Avraham’s tent pictured his earthly life, the altars he built pointed to his Creator, the goal of his worship. In essence, even though Avraham had been given the “title deed” to the Land promised to him, he chose instead to wait upon *ADONAI*, doing just as the prophet *Yesha'yahu* later wrote of, “they who wait for *ADONAI* shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint” (40.31, from this week’s Haftorah). We know that Avraham was a man, and he did tend to jump ahead of *ADONAI* at times (Ishmael being a prime example), but on the whole his character and faith earned him wonderful rewards – he became the father of a great nation, the chosen people; and his faith journey is recounted in the great “hall of faith” chapter, Hebrews 11. In *Yesha'yahu* 41.8 (also from this week’s Haftorah), *ADONAI* Himself calls Avraham “My friend”.

So in our own travels upon this earth, we first of all must acknowledge that we are indeed “aliens and temporary residents” (Hebrew 11.13 quoting from 1 Chronicles 29.15). The structures of Avraham should be before our eyes, i.e., the tent, to remind us that most of our pursuits in this life are fleeting; and the altar, which should remind us that our true pursuit is after *ADONAI*. Regarding a tent, pitching it meant securing it to withstand the elements of nature. Although much of what we do in this life may be temporary, if it is worthy of honor to our Creator, we are not to treat these things carelessly or neglect them. Home, career, worthy causes, we are to treat all these with diligence and respect, but at the end of the day everything will fold up like a tent and be removed. The altar reminds us of the permanency of the eternal, that our worship is forever.

We have been given reminders of the eternal in our worship, through blessings such as the cycle of the Holy Days; Torah and all of Scripture; even the cycle of life, from birth to death, points to the eternal. Worship music old and new leads us on to that time when all of the songs of praise from history will come together in one grand and glorious symphony before the throne of *ADONAI*. A person of faith believes that there is more to life than what our natural eye sees; this person can see the eternal in the everyday. If we have built altars of worship to *ADONAI* as we have journeyed, then when we have moments of faltering,

that particular altar will still be there to remind us to call upon His strength. When everything that is temporal is gone, and all we are left with is the grace in which we stand, what else will matter anyway?

Faith is the foundation upon which we build our altar; faith is even the solid ground into which we drive the pegs of our tent. Faith is what causes us to cling to our Creator; faith is what causes us to cling to Yeshua; faith is what causes us to hold onto our belief that Yeshua is Messiah, Son of G-d, in fact is G-d, a member of the mysterious triune G-dhead. Sadly, within the Messianic movement, that is becoming a question in some areas. To not believe this of Yeshua is the same as driving your tent-pegs into shifting sand – your tent's not going to endure the storms, the trials of life, for very long. Step one – get to “know” Him deeply, with all your heart, your soul, your strength. This takes commitment to a covenant, something too many are quick to run from at the first sign of trouble. Shifting sand. Rather, seek out and build upon the Solid Ground, which will be eternal.

Sha'ul says in Romans 5.2-5, that this “grace in which we stand,” will cause us to, “rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame.” Romans 4.3 tells us that Avraham put his faith in God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness. Romans 4.20-25 expounds upon this teaching, “He [Avraham] did not by lack of faith decide against God's promises. On the contrary, by faith he was given power as he gave glory to God, for he was fully convinced that what God had promised he could also accomplish. This is why it was credited to his account as righteousness. But the words, ‘it was credited to his account...,’ were not written for him only. They were written also for us, who will certainly have our account credited too, because we have faith in him who raised Yeshua our Lord from the dead – Yeshua, who was delivered over to death because of our offenses and raised to life in order to make us righteous.”

Upon whom or what do you “pitch your tent”? The Hebrew word for *tent* is אֹהֶל *o-hel*, the root is *ah-hal*, meaning “to be clear, to shine”. Are you a city set on a hill? Do you “let your light shine before people, so that they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven”? Do you “count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance”? Trials can wear us down, yet trials are bound to increase in the coming days. Let us all press in and press on together in the Name of the Messiah Yeshua.

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May Israel turn to recognize their Messiah, so that they may pitch their tents in Solid Ground.

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1.11 CJB)