

Lekh L'kha

Genesis 12:1 - 17:27

This translation was taken from the JPS Tanakh

Chapter 12

¹ The Lord said to Abram, Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.

² I will make of you a great nation,
And I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
And you shall be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you
And curse him that curses you;
And all the families of the earth
Shall bless themselves by you."

⁴ Abram went forth as the Lord had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. ⁵ Abram 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 for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, at the terebinth of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.

⁷ The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "I will assign this land to your heirs." And he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and he built there an altar to the Lord and invoked the Lord by name. ⁹ Then Abram journeyed by stages toward the Negeb.

¹⁰ There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹ As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are." ¹² If the Egyptians see you, and think, 'She is his wife,' they will kill me and let you live. ¹³ Please say that you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may remain alive thanks to you."

¹⁴ When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was. ¹⁵ Pharaoh's courtiers saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace. ¹⁶ And because of her, it went well with Abram; he acquired sheep, oxen, asses, male and female slaves, she-asses, and camels.

¹⁷ But the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his household with mighty plagues on account of Sarai, the wife of Abram. ¹⁸ Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me! Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?" ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife; take her and begone!" ²⁰ And Pharaoh put men in charge of him, and they sent him off with his wife and all that he possessed.

Chapter 13

¹ From Egypt, Abram went up into the Negeb, with his wife and all that he possessed, together with Lot. ² Now Abram was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold. ³ And he proceeded by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been formerly, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴ the site of the altar that he had built there at first; and there Abram invoked the Lord by name.

⁵ Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, ⁶ so that the land could not support them staying together; for their possessions were so great that they could not remain together. ⁷ And there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and those of Lot's cattle. — The Canaanites and Perizzites were then dwelling in the land. — ⁸ Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, between my herdsmen and yours, for we are kinsmen. ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Let us separate: if you go north, I will go south; and if you go south, I will go north." ¹⁰ Lot looked about him and saw how well watered was the whole plain of the Jordan, all of it—this was before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—all the way to Zoar, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt. ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they parted from each other; ¹² Abram remained in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the Plain, pitching his tents near Sodom. ¹³ Now the inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked sinners against the Lord.

¹⁴ And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had parted from him, "Raise your eyes and look out from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west, ¹⁵ for I give all the land that you see to you and your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, then your offspring too can be counted. ¹⁷ Up, walk about the land, through its length and its breadth, for I give it to you." ¹⁸ And Abram moved his tent, and came to dwell at the terebinths of Mamre, which are in Hebron; and he built an altar there to the Lord.

Chapter 14

¹ Now, when King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim ² made war on King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar, ³ all the latter joined forces at the Valley of Siddim, now the Dead Sea. ⁴ Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵ In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim at Ham, the Emim at Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶ and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness. ⁷ On their way back they came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and subdued all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazazon-tamar. ⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar, went forth and engaged them in battle in the Valley of Siddim: ⁹ King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against those five.

¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was dotted with bitumen pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, in their flight, threw themselves into them, while the rest escaped to the hill country. ¹¹ [The invaders] seized all the wealth of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their provisions, and went their way. ¹² They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, and his possessions, and departed; for he had settled in Sodom.

¹³ A fugitive brought the news to Abram the Hebrew, who was dwelling at the terebinths of Mamre the Amorite, kinsman of Eshkol and Aner, these being Abram's allies. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he mustered his retainers, born into his household, numbering three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ At night, he and his servants deployed against them and defeated them; and he pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. ¹⁶ He brought back all the possessions; he also brought back his kinsman Lot and his possessions, and the women and the rest of the people.

¹⁷ When he returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh, which is the Valley of the King. ¹⁸ And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ He blessed him, saying,

"Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.
²⁰ And blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your foes into your hand."

And [Abram] gave him a tenth of everything.

²¹ Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the possessions for yourself." ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I swear to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth: ²³ I will not take so much as a thread or a sandal strap of what is yours; you shall not say, 'It is I who made Abram rich.' ²⁴ For me, nothing but what my servants have used up; as for the share of the men who went with me-Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre-let them take their share."

Chapter 15

¹ Some time later, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. He said,

"Fear not, Abram,
I am a shield to you;
Your reward shall be very great."

² But Abram said, "O Lord God, what can You give me, seeing that I shall die childless, and the one in charge of my household is Dammesek Eliezer!" ³ Abram said further, "Since You have granted me no offspring, my steward will be my heir." ⁴ The word of the Lord came to him in reply, "That one shall not be your heir; none but your very own issue shall be your heir." ⁵ He took him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He added, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ And because he put his trust in the Lord, He reckoned it to his merit.

⁷ Then He said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to assign this land to you as a possession." ⁸ And he said, "O Lord God, how shall I know that I am to possess it?" ⁹ He answered, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old she-goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove,

and a young bird." ¹⁰ He brought Him all these and cut them in two, placing each half opposite the other; but he did not cut up the bird. ¹¹ Birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. ¹² As the sun was about to set, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a great dark dread descended upon him. ¹³ And He said to Abram, "Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years; ¹⁴ but I will execute judgment on the nation they shall serve, and in the end they shall go free with great wealth. ¹⁵ As for you,

You shall go to your fathers in peace;
You shall be buried at a ripe old age.

¹⁶ And they shall return here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

¹⁷ When the sun set and it was very dark, there appeared a smoking oven, and a flaming torch which passed between those pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I assign this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates: ¹⁹ the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

Chapter 16

¹ Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. ² And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, the Lord has kept me from bearing. Consort with my maid; perhaps I shall have a son through her." And Abram heeded Sarai's request. ³ So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian-after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan ten years-and gave her to her husband Abram as concubine. ⁴ He cohabited with Hagar and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her esteem. ⁵ And Sarai said to Abram, "The wrong done me is your fault! I myself put my maid in your bosom; now that she sees that she is pregnant, I am lowered in her esteem. The Lord decide between you and me!" ⁶ Abram said to Sarai, "Your maid is in your hands. Deal with her as you think right." Then Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from her.

⁷ An angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur, ⁸ and said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" And she said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai."

⁹ And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Go back to your mistress, and submit to her harsh treatment." ¹⁰ And the angel of the Lord said to her,

"I will greatly increase your offspring,
And they shall be too many to count."

¹¹ The angel of the Lord said to her further,

"Behold, you are with child
And shall bear a son;
You shall call him Ishmael,
For the Lord has paid heed to your suffering.

¹² He shall be a wild ass of a man;
His hand against everyone,
And everyone's hand against him;

He shall dwell alongside of all his kinsmen."

¹³ And she called the Lord who spoke to her, "You Are El-roi," by which she meant, "Have I not gone on seeing after He saw me!" ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it is between Kadesh and Bered. — ¹⁵ Hagar bore a son to Abram, and Abram gave the son that Hagar bore him the name Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Chapter 17

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk in My ways and be blameless. ² I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous."

³ Abram threw himself on his face; and God spoke to him further, ⁴ "As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you; and kings shall come forth from you. ⁷ I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come. ⁸ I assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting holding. I will be their God."

⁹ God further said to Abraham, "As for you, you and your offspring to come throughout the ages shall keep My covenant. ¹⁰ Such shall be the covenant between Me and you and your offspring to follow which you shall keep: every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. ¹² And throughout the generations, every male among you shall be circumcised at the age of eight days. As for the homeborn slave and the one bought from an outsider who is not of your offspring, ¹³ they must be circumcised, homeborn, and purchased alike. Thus shall My covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting pact. ¹⁴ And if any male who is uncircumcised fails to circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his kin; he has broken My covenant."

¹⁵ And God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall issue from her." ¹⁷ Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed, as he said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man a hundred years old, or can Sarah bear a child at ninety?" ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live by Your favor!" ¹⁹ God said, "Nevertheless, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac; and I will maintain My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring to come. ²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heeded you. I hereby bless him. I will make him fertile and exceedingly numerous. He shall be the father of twelve chieftains, and I will make of him a great nation. ²¹ But My covenant I will maintain with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year." ²² And when He was done speaking with him, God was gone from Abraham.

²³ Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all his homeborn slaves and all those he had bought, every male in Abraham's household, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on that very day, as God had spoken to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, ²⁵ and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ Thus

Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on that very day;²⁷ and all his household, his homeborn slaves and those that had been bought from outsiders, were circumcised with him.

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