Darshan Yeshiva

Parshah Lech Lecha

- Parshah Lech-Lecha is the third parshah in the Torah. The text of this parshah is Genesis 12:1-17:27.

- We begin reading “Now the LORD said unto Abram: “Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto the land that I will show you.” The parshah is named after the command given to Abram. Lech-Lecha means “go or leave” and is the first distinct word of this parshah.

- This parshah can be broken into the following segments: call of Abram; Abram and Sarai in Egypt; division between Abram and Lot; promise to Abram; Lot taken prisoner; covenant with Abram; Hagar, and name changes and covenant with Abraham.

- God commanded Abram to leave his home and kin “ And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will aggrandize your name, and [you shall] be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you.” So Abram and his people and flocks journey to the land of Canaan. When Abram arrives in the terebinth of Moreh God appeared to Abram and says, “To your descendants I will give this land.” Abram builds an altar to God at this place in honor of the covenant. Abram continued to move south in the land of Canaan.

- Abram was forced by famine to go to Egypt, where Pharaoh took possession of his wife, the beautiful Sarai, who Abram has misrepresented as his sister. God struck the king and his house with plagues, so that he returned Sarai and expeled Abram and all his people from Egypt.

- Abram returned to Canaan and separated from Lot in order to put an end to disputes about pasturage. He gave Lot the valley of the Jordan River, as far as Sodom, whose people “were very evil and sinful against God.”
- To Abram, God said, “Please raise your eyes and see, from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward. For all the land that you see I will give to you and to your seed to eternity. And I will make your seed like the dust of the earth, so that if a man will be able to count the dust of the earth, so will your seed be counted. Rise, walk in the land, to its length and to its breadth, for I will give it to you.”

- Lot was taken prisoner during a war between the King of Shinar and the King of Sodom and their allies, “four kings against five.” Abram rescued Lot and was blessed by Melchizedek, king of Salem and “priest of God Most High.” Abram refused the King of Sodom's offer of the spoils of victory, saying: “I raise my hand to the Lord, the Most High God, Who possesses heaven and earth. Neither from a thread to a shoe strap, nor will I take from whatever is yours, that you should not say, 'I have made Abram wealthy.”

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- God made a covenant with Abram, promising that Abram's descendants shall be as numerous as the stars in the heavens. This covenant was sealed by sacrifices, which became known as the "covenant between the parts." God told Abram that his descendants shall suffer oppression in a foreign land for four hundred years, but that they shall inherit the land "from the river of Egypt until the great river, the Euphrates river."

- Sarai, was childless and told Abram to take his Egyptian handmaiden, Hagar, as a concubine. Hagar became pregnant with Ishmael and Sarai became jealous. Hagar fled from the hand of Sarai. God's angel appeared to her to promise that the child will be "a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be upon all, and everyone's hand upon him," whose descendants "will not be counted for abundance."

- God made a covenant with Abram – Abram will have a numerous progeny and they will take possession of the land of Canaan. Abram's name was changed to Abraham and the name of Sarai is changed to Sarah. Circumcision of all males was instituted as an external sign of the covenant. Abraham pleaded on Ishmael's behalf and God stated that Ishmael will be blessed but the covenant will be established with Isaac. Abraham followed God's command and circumcised himself and all the males in his household.

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