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## News

### I AM ISRAEL

This week I received an email with a moving video posted on Youtube, "I am Israel". Its melody is the beautiful song "Jerusalem of God" *Yerushalaim shel Zahav*. If you love Israel and the Jewish people, I invite you to look at this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4bM2QG3r-I>.



### SUCCOTH IN ARGENTINA

David Barzola sent again some news and pictures from his congregations. He is one of the most actives of our Jewish Adventist leaders, he knows how to take the opportunity of the Festival to bring the message of Yeshua to Jews.



# Shabbat Lech-Lecha

October 16, 2010

8 Cheshvan 5771



### BAPTISMS IN ISRAEL

Pastor Mendez sent us a news about his new baptisms in Israel. Many foreign people come to visit Israel or even to work in Israel, it was the case of **Cynthia, Leah, Arnel** who came from the Philippines to work as caregivers for old people in Israel, they were Catholics but their contact with Adventists help them to see the truth and to ask to be baptized.



**Peter** is a diplomat, finance officer in the Kenyan Embassy in Tel Aviv, his wife was the first to be in contact with our community and she was baptized alone, but the more her husband searched and the more he discovered that what the Adventists believe is grounded in the Bible and in the Jewish beliefs. He joined a bible study group and finally asked to be baptized. **Paul (his original name was Abdulhamed)** was a Muslim originally from Sudan but he escaped his own country and found a harbor of peace in Israel. Discovering the Adventist community, and its truth he decided to join us by the baptism.





# OVERVIEW

## LECH-LECHA

### GENESIS 12:1-17: 27

**T**en generations have passed since Noah. Man has descended spiritually. According to the Jewish tradition Avram was born in the year 1948 from Creation. By observing the world, Avram recognized G-d's existence, and G-d appears to him.

At the beginning of this week's Torah portion G-d tells Avram to leave his land, his relatives and his father's house and travel to an unknown land where G-d will make him into a great nation.

Avram leaves, taking with him his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, their servants, and those whom they converted to faith in G-d. When they reach the land of Canaan, G-d appears to Avram and tells him that this is the land that He will give to his descendants.

A famine ensues and Avram is forced to relocate to Egypt to find food. Realizing that his wife's beauty would cause his death at the hand of the Egyptians, Avram asks her to say that she is his sister. Sarai is taken to Pharaoh, but G-d afflicts Pharaoh and his court with severe plagues and she is released unmolested. Avram returns to Canaan with much wealth given to him by the Egyptians.

During a quarrel over grazing rights between their shepherds, Avram decides to part ways with his nephew Lot. Lot chooses to live in the rich but corrupt city of Sodom in the fertile plain of the Jordan.

A war breaks out between the kings of the region and Sodom is defeated. Lot is taken captive. Together with a handful of his converts, Avram rescues Lot, miraculously overpowering vastly superior forces, but Avram refuses to accept any of the spoils of the battle.

In a prophetic covenant, G-d reveals to Avram that his offspring will be exiled to a strange land where they will be oppressed after which they will emerge with great wealth and return to Canaan, their irrevocable inheritance.

Sarai is barren and gives Hagar, her Egyptian hand-maiden, to Avram in the hope that she will provide them with a child. Hagar becomes arrogant

when she discovers that she is pregnant. Sarai deals harshly with her, and Hagar flees. On the instruction of an angel Hagar returns to Avram, and gives birth to Yishmael.

The weekly portion concludes with G-d commanding Avram to circumcise himself and his offspring throughout the generations as a Divine covenant.

G-d changes Avram's name to Abraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah. Hashem promises Abraham a son, Yitzchak, despite Abraham being ninety-nine years old and Sarah ninety. On that day, Abraham circumcises himself, Yishmael and all his household.

## LECH LECHA

**T**orah commentaries ask, why does the Torah use the words *Lech Lecha* which literally means "go for you" when only the word *Lech* "go" would have sufficed?

Rashi explains that G-d is telling Abraham that although this commandment may seem difficult at this time, it is in fact, "for your benefit and for your pleasure." For whatever G-d does and whatever He wants us to do is in truth for our benefit and if we accept it as such, it is also for our pleasure, whether we see it at the time or not.

A wise person said, "Generally, the things in which a person finds pleasure are not necessarily for the person's benefit. But, the pleasure one derives through performing G-d's commandments are indeed for our benefit!"

Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sasov had a unique way of dealing with difficult situations, so that they do not get in his way of serving G-d with happiness.

He would say: "What is in the past is already in the past and there is nothing I can do about it anyway, so why worry about it. As for the future, it didn't happen yet, so why worry. I put my trust in G-d that things will be good."

"The only worry I can see having, concerns the present. But the present is so short, it lasts only a moment, and anybody can handle a little trouble for one a moment!"

## ABRAHAM THE PROSELYTIZER

**T**he Torah states: "Abram took Sarai his wife and his nephew Lot, and all their wealth that they had amassed, and the people they

had acquired in Charan; and they embarked for the land of Canaan, and they came to the land of Canaan.” (Genesis 12:5)

They brought them under the wings of the Divine Presence: According to the Jewish tradition the Patriarchs were active in converting people around them, Rashi said that Abraham converted the men, and Sarah converted the women (Rashi to Genesis 12:5).

## COUNT THE STARS

**T**he Torah states: “And (the Almighty) took (Avraham) outside and He said to him, ‘Look up, please, at the heavens and count the stars, if you can count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So, too, will be your descendants’” (Genesis 15:5). Rabbi Packouz asks this question: Was the Almighty just telling Avraham about the number of his descendants—or was there a deeper message? Here is his answer.

The Baal Shem Tov explained that the descendants of Avraham are like stars. We see the stars from a great distance and they appear to be mere tiny specks, but in reality in the heaven they are gigantic. So, too, in this world many people look very small. However, in reality they have greatness!

When you look at another person—particularly, a child—realize that he is like a star. He might seem small to you. He might not appear as having accomplished very much. Gain an awareness of the great potential of each person. View each person as an entire world, as an enormous being in the cosmos.

When you see people in this light you will behave towards them with great respect. When you show others this respect, they will gain greater respect for themselves. This can give a person the encouragement he needs to live up to his potential greatness!

## THREE PERIODS OF 2,000 YEARS

**W**orld history, the Sages tell us, is divided into three periods, each lasting 2,000 years, and after these three periods of 2,000 years the earth will be in rest for 1,000 years (Sanhedrin 171). The first is called the Era of Tohu Va’vohu (void and nothingness), the second, the Era of Torah, and the third, the Messianic Era. The

Sages identify the beginning of the Era of Torah with Abraham’s conversion of the idol worshippers of Charan into believers in G-d.” The Messianic Era started two thousands years ago and it fits very well with the coming of Yeshua who started this Messianic Era, we are now waiting for the end of the last period of 2,000 years which will end with the last coming of Mashiach and the starting of the 1,000 years of rest for the earth.

## ABRAHAM AND G-D’S LAW

**W**hy did the Sages view this event (Abraham) as ushering in the Era of Torah? We know that Adam, Noe, Melchisedek and other righteous knew G-d’s law, however, Abraham is the first who was praised for keeping the mitzvot of G-d “Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” The Hebrew words used in this verse are from the roots “Mitsva”, “Chuk”, and “Torah”, thus the Jewish tradition is correct saying that the Era of Torah started with Abraham and not with Moses. This is in harmony with the Adventist tradition when Ellen White affirms that “*The law of G-d, which was the condition of the divine covenant with Abraham.*” (CC 61.) And “*G-d called Abraham to be a teacher of His word, He chose him to be the father of a great nation, because He saw that Abraham would instruct his children and his household in the principles of G-d’s law. And that which gave power to Abraham’s teaching was the influence of his own life.*” (Ed. 187). And also “*This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 22:18.) This promise pointed to Mashiach. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in the Mashiach for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of G-d’s law. The L-rd appeared unto Abraham, and said, “I am the Almighty G-d; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” The testimony of G-d concerning His faithful servant was, “Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” Genesis 17:1; 26:5. . . . (FLB 77.) It is our privilege today to affirm that this covenant with Abraham is the same covenant that G-d has made with Yeshua in the Second Testament.*

## A TRUE STORY

One of the victims of the recent terrorist shooting near Hevron was Kokhava Even-Chaim. Kokhava, 37, was a teacher in the city of Efrat. She was survived by a 10-year-old daughter and by her husband Maimon, a volunteer paramedic who was among the first at the scene of the attack that claimed his wife's life.

As Kokhava's family sat shiva, the seven-day mourning period, they were visited by neighbors and friends who came to give comfort and to share stories about Kokhava. One set of unexpected visitors shared a story about how Kokhava's kindness saved a young soldier.

The visitors, a middle aged irreligious couple from Kibbutz Hagoshrim in northern Israel, began their story by talking about the hospitality that Kokhava and her husband showed to soldiers stationed in the Hevron area. The family would invite at least two soldiers for every Sabbath meal.

On one Sabbath day a few years ago, the Even-Chaim family hosted two soldiers. Kokhava asked them if every soldier in the area had a place to eat the Sabbath meal, and was told that there was one soldier who had chosen to remain in the barracks because he was unhappy. Kokhava prepared a plate of food for the soldiers to bring to him when they left.

As the two were leaving, she asked why their fellow soldier was sad. They explained that it was his birthday, but his commanding officer had rejected his request to go home for the day and celebrate with his family. The soldier was very upset by the rejection, and had become depressed, they said.

Immediately after the Sabbath ended, Kokhava baked a cake and invited all the soldiers to come over for an impromptu birthday party.

The couple from Kibbutz Hagoshrim explained that the lonely, depressed soldier who Kokhava baked a cake for was their son. He had been so seriously depressed at the time that he considered running away from the army, and even thought of suicide. However, the kindness Kokhava showed him amazed him so much that he was shaken out of his depression.

For that reason, they said, they had come all the way from the north to southern Judea to mourn a woman they had never met. (Israel News staff)

## ABRAHAM AND IDOLS

The Midrash asked why God chose Abraham. Rabbi Hiyya said that Abraham's father Terah manufactured idols and once went away and left Abraham to mind the store. A woman came with a plateful of flour and asked Abraham to offer it to the idols. Abraham took a stick, broke the idols, and put the stick in the largest idol's hand. When Terah returned, he demanded that Abraham explain what he had done. Abraham told Terah that the idols fought among themselves and the largest broke the others with the stick. "Why do you make sport of me?" Terah cried, "Do they have any knowledge?" Abraham replied, "Listen to what you are saying!" (Genesis Rabbah 38:13).

## ABRAHAM AND ISRAEL

The Talmud expands on Abraham's conversation with God in Genesis 15:1-21, quoting Abraham to ask: "Master of the Universe, should Israel sin before You, will You do to them as You have done to the generation of the Flood and to the generation of the Dispersion?" God replied: "No." Abraham then said to God: "Master of the Universe, 'Let me know whereby I shall inherit it.'" (Gen. 15:8.) God answered: "Take Me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old." (Gen. 15:9.) Abraham then continued: "Master of the Universe! This holds good while the Temple remains in being, but when the Temple will no longer be, what will become of them?" God replied: "I have already long ago provided for them in the Torah the order of sacrifices, and whenever they read it, I will deem it as if they had offered them before me, and I will grant them pardon for all their iniquities." (Talmud Ta'anit 27b.)

## EDITOR

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# HAFTARA

## Isaiah 40:27 - 41:16

# BRIT HACHADASHA

## Romans 4:1-25

The book of Isaiah is a very beautiful text. the prophet Isaiah was a real poet and our text of this week is a wonderful poem.

**“Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The L-RD is the everlasting G-d,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
(Isaiah 40:28).**

The G-d of Israel is an everlasting G-d with an everlasting love for his children. He call Israel his servant, the chosen, He called Abraham his friend.

Here we have the link between the Parasha and this Haftarah, both of them are about Abraham who left his home to respond to the calling of God.

**But you, Israel, my servant,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen,  
the offspring of Abraham, my friend;  
you whom I took from the ends of the earth,  
and called from its farthest corners,  
saying to you, “You are my servant,  
I have chosen you and not cast you off”;  
do not fear, for I am with you,  
do not be afraid, for I am your G-d;  
I will strengthen you, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.  
(Isaiah 41:8-9)**

G-d is our protection, there is nothing to fear when we are with the Almighty.

Abraham left his home, and was protected during all his life even if he was travelling to an unknown country.

**Fear not,  
for I am with you,  
Be not frightened,  
for I am your G-d;  
I strengthen you and I help you,  
I uphold you with My victorious right hand.  
(Isaiah 41:10)**

Abraham is named in this chapter 7 times. Why Abraham is quoted in that way? Let's take a look at these verses and their context.

There is a debate among scholars saying that Saul (Paul) founded the church and not Yeshua.

Did he found another religion and cancel the law of G-d?

Paul knew that he could be misunderstood in his statements about the Torah. In the previous chapter Paul said that we are justified by grace and not by the observance of the Torah (Rom 3:20). We could think that the Torah is not anymore valid. That's why he ends his chapter 3 saying, **“Do we, then, nullify the Torah by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the Torah.” (31).**

It is therefore clear that Paul and Yeshua agree together saying that the keeping of the Torah is still necessary, but this observance of the Mitsvot is not for salvation. G-d has a better way to save us.

We keep the mitsvot, because we accept that the Almighty knows us and knows what is the best for each one of us.

I keep the mitsvot because I love G-d and want to please him as a child wants to please his father.

Paul gives us the example of Abraham as an illustration. **“What then shall we say that Abraham Avinu, (our forefather), discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about — but not before God. What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Rom. 4:1-3).** Abraham was recognized as righteous. In our parasha we have read that he kept the Torah. But in fact his righteousness came because of his faith, not because of his deeds: **“However, to the man who does not work but trusts G-d who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”** He trusted G-d and left his country **“[Abram] obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.” (Heb 11:8).** This is why **“it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Rom 4:22).**

