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## NEWS

### A RABBI THANKS G-D

On Monday 7th of November Conservative Rabbi Wolpe is In Rockville MD, speaking at the Adventist Health Care Conference on spirituality in medicine. Thanks G-d for sharing blessings.

### A TRIP TO ISRAEL IN 2012

We receive this news from our friend Michael Curzon and Dvorah his wife about a trip they organize in 2012 to Israel, with a possible extension to Egypt after the Israeli tour. This tour will be English and Spanish speaking. They said:

#### **A TRIP OF A LIFETIME TO THE HOLY LAND**

Join us from October 22 to November 1, 2012, as we travel the land of the Bible and share a life-changing spiritual journey. Walk where Jesus walked - Baptismal service in the Jordan River — Worship in the garden near the open tomb and Golgotha — The Upper Room — The Mount of Olives, where Jesus ascended to the Father. Come let us worship together, study biblical prophecy and renew our faith. Rest assured your life will never be the same. As never before, the Bible will literally come alive! Make this journey YOUR Trip of a Lifetime! There is a possibility to extend our trip to Egypt from November 1 to 5, 2012. The departure is organized from New York.

If you are interested by this trip I invite you to contact Pastor Michael Curzon, his e-mail address is [michaelcurzon@hughes.net](mailto:michaelcurzon@hughes.net) and his phone number is 205-541-9887. Pastor Curzon is the first one on the right side of this picture.



### GOOD NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA

Dr Reinaldo Seiquira, professor of Tanach and Hebrew in the Adventist University of Sao Paulo sends us some good news from his Division. Indeed he is the SAD coordinator for the Jewish Adventist Ministry.

In the South American Division we have 9 Jewish Adventist congregations:

- 1) Argentina: 2
  - Beth Bnei Tzion of Buenos Aires
  - Beth Bnei Tzion of Libertador San Martin
- 3) Brazil: 5
  - Beth Bnei Tzion of Campinas
  - Beth Bnei Tzion of Curitiba
  - Beth Bnei Tzion of Manaus
  - Beth Bnei Tzion of Rio de Janeiro
  - Beth Bnei Tzion of São Paulo
- 4) Chile: 1
  - Beth Bnei Tzion of Santiago del Chile
- 5) Uruguay: 1
  - Beth Bnei Tzion of Montevideo

Of these congregations that of Manaus is a new one, just started this year (2011).

In our strategic plans, we are planning to start at least 3 new congregations in nearby future:

- 1) Lima, Peru
- 2) Belém, Brazil
- 3) Porto Alegre, Brazil

We have some brethren that would like to start a Jewish Adventist community in some cities with a small Jewish population. We have been consulted about it for the cities of:

- 1) Guayaquil, Ecuador
- 2) Florianópolis, Brazil

Let's pray for the existing congregations in South America and for their new projects.

# OVERVIEW

## VAYERA

### Genesis 18:1-22:24

Three days after performing *brit-mila* “circumcision” on himself, Abraham is visited by G-d “Adonai” (Gen 18:3). Three angels appear in human form, Abraham rushes to show them hospitality by bringing them into his tent, despite this being the most painful time after the operation.

Sarah laughs when she hears from them that she will bear a son next year.

God reveals to Abraham that He will destroy Sodom, and Abraham pleads for Sodom to be spared.

God agrees that if there are fifty righteous people in Sodom He will not destroy it. Abraham “bargains” God down to ten righteous people. However, not even ten can be found.

Lot, his wife and two daughters are rescued just before sulfur and fire rain down on Sodom and her sister cities. Lot’s wife looks back and is turned into a pillar of salt. Lot’s daughters fear that as a result of the destruction there will be no husbands for them. They decide to get their father drunk and through him to perpetuate the human race.

From the elder daughter, Moab is born, and from the younger, Ammon.

Abraham moves to Gerar where Abimelech abducts Sarah. After God appears to Abimelech in a dream, he releases Sarah and appeases Abraham.

As promised, a son, Itzchak, is born to Sarah and Abraham. On the eighth day after the birth, Abraham circumcises him as commanded.

Abraham makes a feast the day Itzchak is weaned. Sarah tells Abraham to banish Hagar and her son Ishmael because she sees in him signs of degeneracy. Abraham is distressed at the prospect of banishing his son, but G-d tells him to listen to whatever Sarah tells him to do. After nearly dying of thirst in the desert, Ishmael is rescued by an angel and G-d promises that he will be the progenitor of a mighty nation.

Abimelech enters into an alliance with Abraham when he sees that G-d is with him.

In a tenth and final test, G-d instructs Abraham to

take Itzchak, who is now 37, and to offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham does this, in spite of ostensibly aborting Jewish nationhood and contradicting his life-long preaching against human sacrifice.

At the last moment, G-d sends an angel to stop Abraham. Because of Abraham’s unquestioning obedience, G-d promises him that even if the Jewish People sin, they will never be completely dominated by their foes. The parasha ends with the genealogy and birth of Rivka.

## G-D VISITS ABRAHAM

The Parasha starts saying “The L-RD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.” (Gen 18:1). In this chapter it is G-d (YHWH) in the text who visits Abraham. Then the text says how G-d visited him, in the form of three men, and Abraham recognized that one of these three man, or maybe the three men together were G-d. Abraham called him/them “Adonai” in the verse 3, expression used only for G-d. Jewish scholars have discovered that it is G-d who visited Abraham on that day.

Rabbi Noson Weisz said “G-d had no business to conduct with Abraham, no commandments to deliver; He simply came to pay him a visit to cheer him up and make him feel better. We can all appreciate that a visit from G-d is no ordinary experience. G-d does not go around visiting us, even when we are sick. Such a visit is akin to being transported to Paradise or Olam Haba, “the World to Come.” The Talmud (Brochot 17a) describes the World to Come as a place where the righteous sit and bask in the Joy of G-d’s Presence. A visit from G-d surely places its recipient in the identical position.”

## BRIT MILAH

In this week’s Parasha, Vayeira, we read about the mitzvah of circumcision (Brit). The Torah relates how Sarah, at the age of ninety, gave birth to a son. Abraham, who was one hundred, circumcised his son on the eighth day and named him Itzchak (Isaac), just as G-d commanded him. Itzchak was the first Jew to be circumcised at eighth day. Abraham was more than ninety-years old. and Ishmael was thirteen.

It was also on the day of the circumcision that Itzchak received his name. Why do the Jews have this custom

to name their sons on the day of the circumcision? In the Parasha we read that when G-d told Abraham about the Brit Milah (circumcision), at the same time He changed his name from Abram to Abraham. Thus, Jews too, name the baby at his circumcision.

## FEEL THE JOY OF GROWTH

**T**he Torah states: “And (Abraham) lifted up his eyes and he saw. And behold three men were standing near him and he saw and he ran to greet them from the entrance of the tent” (Genesis 18:2).

Rabbi Packouz asks some questions: from verse 2 until verse 8, the Torah details each specific act of Abraham’s hospitality towards his guests — “he lifted up his eyes,” “he saw,” “he ran to greet them.” Why does the Torah spend seven verses describing the details of Avraham’s kindness?

Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz commented on this with an analogy. When a person inherits a house, he will usually just say, “I have a house.” He will not elaborate on all of the details since he received everything at one time. However, a person who builds a house for himself will talk about every detail from the beginning until the end. He will describe how he purchased the land for the site of the house, how he bought the material that went into building the house, and so on. Each aspect is very dear to him. The more effort he put into the house, the more he will talk about it.

Similarly, said Rav Yeruchem, the actions and behavior of the righteous are like a building. With each action, a righteous person is building a great edifice. For this reason, the Torah tells us about each detail of Avraham’s chesed (kindness). Every movement was another stage in the building of a righteous person.

When you view yourself as building a great person, every detail of what you do is invested with meaning and importance. Every positive action you do is creating a great human being. Keep this in mind when you do an act of kindness for others. Every movement you make is a necessary part of the entire construction. Don’t wait for the end to appreciate what you are doing. Rather, feel the joy of growth in even the smallest act of kindness that you do.

## ABRAHAM’S LOVE

**T**he Torah states: “Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. Then God said, “Take your

son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.” Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. (Gen 22:1-3)

Rabbi Abba Wagensberg says that “Our tradition teaches that God tested Abraham 10 times (Avot 5:3). Although Abraham had many extraordinary character traits, it was his overwhelming love for G-d that enabled him to pass his tests. In Isaiah (41:8), G-d describes Abraham as “Avraham ohavi” — “Abraham, the one who loves Me.” Abraham’s tremendous love for G-d enabled him to carry out the Divine will time after time, even in exceptionally challenging situations.

We see this idea in the Talmud’s statement that love breaks all norms (Sanhedrin 105b). When a person is truly in love, there is nothing he wouldn’t do for his beloved.

Abraham demonstrates this quality in this week’s parasha when G-d commands him to sacrifice his son, Isaac. The Torah tells us that Abraham got up early in the morning to perform G-d’s command, even performing menial tasks such as saddling his own donkey and chopping wood for the sacrifice (Genesis 22:3) Abraham’s zeal and willingness to perform such tasks himself, instead of appointing one of his many servants to do so, was a manifestation of his incredible love for G-d.

**Sources:** These comments of the parasha are based on comments published by Rabbi Zalmen Pakouz, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, Rabbi Ozer Alport, Rabbi Ari Kahn, Rabbi Noson Weisz, and Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek, from Aish HaTorah (Aish.com). By Rabbi Naftali Reich, Rabbi Berel Wein and Rabbi Yochanan Zweig, Rabbi Yissocher Frand from Torah.org (Project Genenis). By Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair from Ohr Somayach, by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky, and Rabbi Zalmen Marozov.

## CALM AND COMPOSURE

**Y**ankel was a vagabond. Every Friday he would spend the last of his few zloty at the bathhouse and barber and, well groomed, he would present himself in the synagogue as a respected businessperson from out-of-town. Then he would usually get a sumptuous Shabbat meal at the home of the wealthiest Jew in town. One Friday afternoon he was in the city of Lodz and inquired about the wealthiest Jew. “Velvel, the banker,” he was told “is definitely the wealthiest Jew. But he is also the stingiest. You never get a chance to eat the delicious dishes that he serves you!”

“How’s that?” asked Yankel.

“Well, as soon as you take your first bite he engages you in conversation. You begin to speak, and as soon as your eyes leave your plate, a waiter comes and snatches your food away!”

With a game plan in mind Yankel posed as a businessman from Warsaw, and got invited to Reb Velvel’s magnificent home. The table was set with exquisite china, and the delicious smells wafting from the kitchen made Yankel’s hungry mouth water.

After kiddush and challah, the first course was served, a succulent piece of white fish stuffed with gefilte fish. As Yankel speared it with his fork a voice boomed from the head of the table.

“So, Yankel, tell me, how is my cousin Shloime feeling? You must know Shloime, the tailor of Podolska Street in Warsaw?”

Yankel kept his fork embedded in the fish and held tight as he nodded somberly. “He’s dead.”

“What?” shrieked Reb Velvel, “Shloime is dead? How can that be?” He ran to the kitchen and shouted for his wife, while Yankel managed to finish his fish in comfort. He even got in a few nibbles off an adjoining plate. After the shock wore off, they served the soup.

After the first sip, the banker was quick to his old ways. “You don’t happen to know my father’s brother Reb David the bookbinder, do you?”

With the waiter poised to pounce, Yankel nodded again. “He died too!”

“What?” cried the stunned host. “How can that be? I just got a letter from him last week!”

He ran next door to tell his brother the terrible news -- while Yankel calmly finished his soup.

The main course, with chicken, kugel and tzimmes also saw the death of more members of the Warsaw community, each tiding throwing the banker into a tizzy. Meanwhile Yankel ate his portion and all the portions of those who were sickened by the terrible news that they had just heard.

By the time dessert came, the banker got hold of the scheme.

“What’s going on?” he shouted. “Are you trying to tell me that the entire Warsaw has dropped dead?”

“No,” answered Yankel, “what I am trying to tell you is that when I eat, the whole world drops dead!”

The blessing of plenty is worthless without serenity. Peace in your land is not only a blessing for military men. It is a blessing that enhances every aspect of life, from breaking ground to breaking bread. What good are storehouses of plenty or a wonderful economy without the peace and harmony in which to enjoy them?

Calm and composure are the greatest blessing. For without them, the bread of plenty can still be bread of affliction. The Torah does not give half-baked blessings. It tells us that we will eat our bread to satisfaction because it guarantees us peace in our land. For we must not only pray for sustenance, but also health, well being, and serenity with which to enjoy it.

## EDITOR

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# HAFTARA

## 2Kings 4 :1-37

**T**his chapter of the Second book of Kings tells us about the Ministry of Elisha and Gehazi his servant to an unnamed lady called the Shunammith, that means a native of Shunem, a place belonging to the tribe of Issachar. This place lies in a very rich section of Israel a short distance north of Jezreel at the foot of "Little Hermon."

The rabbis have certainly read this Haftara in connection with the Parasha Vayera because of their evidence parallel.

**Parasha:** The angel who visited Abraham said: **"I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son."** (Genesis 18:10). It is a promise to Sarah that she will have a son.

**Haftara:** Elisha plays the role of the angel in this text. He said to the Shunammith: **"At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son."** She replied, **"No, my lord, O man of God; do not deceive your servant."** **The woman conceived and bore a son at that season, in due time, as Elisha had declared to her.** (2Kings 4:16,17)

The next point about this haftara is that this story is special for its length and complexity. usually miracles in the First Testament are short and rare, but this text is an exception. Elisha wants to reward the Shulamit for her kindness to him and not only he promised to her that she will have a son, but later when her son died, he raised him.

**Parasha:** In the parasha we have also a complex text with many miracles, it seems to us that the life of Abraham was a succession of miracles. In Genesis 18 to 22 we see: **1<sup>st</sup> miracle**, he is practicing on himself circumcision and survived to it. **2<sup>nd</sup> miracle:** Three angels appeared to Abraham. **3<sup>rd</sup> miracle:** they announced to Sarah that she will have a boy and that happened the next year **4<sup>th</sup> miracle:** God announced to Abraham the destruction of Sodom, that happened but Lot and his daughter are miraculously saved. **5<sup>th</sup> miracle:** God appeared to Abimelech in order to save Sarah from dishonor. **6<sup>th</sup> miracle:** An Angel saves Hagar and Ishmael from death in the desert. **7<sup>th</sup> miracle:** God saves Itzchak from being a sacrifice by his father by stopping the hand of the killer and providing a ram to be sacrificed instead of the son.

# BRIT HACHADASHA

## Heb 6:9-21

**O**ur parasha is about the promises to Abraham Promised to save Sodom if there were at least 10 righteous. The promise to get a son from Sarah. The promise to feed and to save Ishmael who was sent out from the house of his father. and the promise to become a great nation because he did not hesitate to offer his loved son Itzchak.

We have many references to the promises to Abraham in the Brit hachadasha. Last week we have seen the connection between Melchitsedek and Yeshua, this week I want to look at the chapter of the letter written to the Hebrews. It is very important to remember that this letter was written for Hebrews, that means for Jews. In fact in the first century there were two kinds of believers, the Jews and the Gentiles. This letter is a Jewish reminder of the promises and their fulfilment in Yeshua. This small portion, starting by **"dear friends"** (6:9) is really of the same tune of the other letters written by Shaul, he has a great affection for his readers. He wants first to thank them for helping HIS people, that means the people of G-d. If we don't remember who are His people we have just to come back to **Rom 11:1** and we will understand. Suddenly Shaul speaks about our time **"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure."** (6:11). We are today at the very end, Yeshua is coming back soon, the wish of Shaul is that we (those who are living at the very end) continue to help HIS people (that means the Jewish people exactly like the believers of the first century did it. Because our Hope is in the promises made to Abraham, it is written **"When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised."** (6:13-15) Abraham received what was promised when Itzchak was born, but today the promise is fulfilled in all who have believed in Yeshua the Mashiach. The promise is **unchangeable** (6:18) each one of us participate to the blessings of this promise, we have just to believe.