

Notes: July 18, 2020

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Jeri - Drash
8. Praise and Worship Songs
9. Message
10. Aaronic Blessing
11. Kiddush
12. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: Summer of Faith Tour - Avraham

I shared this perspective when talking about trust / faith last Shabbat...

“Our faith is revealed through the framework of culture. We do not truly know what we can endure unless it is tested. It is tested by the time and the culture we reside in. Faith is not required in a vacuum, absent of trials and tribulation. Faith flourishes when tested. You don't know what the true capacity of your faith is until it is tested to its limits.

I did not do this last Shabbat but am going to do it today and that is look at two of the words in Hebrews 11:1 and their definitions.

This is from the Complete Jewish Study Bible translation...

Heb 11:1 Trusting is **being confident** of what we hope for, convinced about things we do not see.

Confident (translated as substance in KJV) is defined as...

state of feeling certain about the truth of something.

feeling or belief that one can rely on someone or something; firm trust.

Convinced (adjective) Not the verb to convince. (Translated as evidence in the KJV)

completely certain about something

firm in one's belief with regard to a particular cause or issue.

We next read of Avraham as conveyed by the writer of Hebrews. Now there are many aspects we can take from Avraham's life and expand upon. It is conveyed that Avraham went through 10 tests from Adonai, that is at least 10 that have been recorded in Torah.

of thought about this. Here are some.

Maimonides lists them as follows:

1. G-d tells him to leave his homeland to be a stranger in the land of Canaan. B'midbar (Genesis) 12:1
2. Immediately after his arrival in the Promised Land, he encounters a famine. B'midbar (Genesis) 12:10
3. The Egyptians seize his beloved wife, Sarah, and bring her to Pharaoh. B'midbar (Genesis) 12:15
4. Abraham faces incredible odds in the battle of the four and five kings. B'midbar (Genesis) 14:14
5. He marries Hagar after not being able to have children with Sarah. B'midbar (Genesis) 16:3
6. G-d tells him to circumcise himself at an advanced age. B'midbar (Genesis) 17:24
7. The king of Gerar captures Sarah, intending to take her for himself. B'midbar (Genesis) 20:2
8. G-d tells him to send Hagar away after having a child with her. B'midbar (Genesis) 21:12
9. His son, Ishmael, becomes estranged. B'midbar (Genesis) 21:12
10. G-d tells him to sacrifice his dear son Isaac upon an altar. B'midbar (Genesis) 22:2

So, I could spend weeks going through each one or choose one and expand upon it. Avraham was most certainly tested within the culture he resided. The culture most certainly was a factor when dealing with the Egyptians and King Gerar regarding Sarah. Yet much of what Avraham would be challenged by was not external but rather internal. He in essence responded to the situation that was framed by the culture he resided in. At times he didn't do well. Yet, this doesn't mean because you didn't do well you are to give up. Faith requires perseverance.

All were challenging on their own merit, but there is one test that requires our attention today.

Heb 11:8 By trusting, Avraham obeyed, after being called to go out to a place which God would give him as a possession; indeed, he went out without knowing where he was going.

The Akedah, the Binding of Issac is certainly the most significant of Avraham's tests in that it provides us with an image of what the Passover will ultimately do, not just for the nation, but the entire world. Yet, all of this would not be possible had Avraham not taken that first step in obeying Adonai to leave his home and travel to a land he did not know and in essence would be a foreigner there.

In looking at the place where Avraham lived was a place called Ur Kasdim where his father left...

Gen 11:31 Terach took his son Avram, his son Haran's son Lot, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Avram's wife; and they left Ur of the Kasdim to go to the land of Kena'an. But when they came to Haran, they stayed there.

We know very little about Ur of the Kasdim and Haran in terms of cultural dynamic. Last Shabbat I was able to provide you with an accurate account of the climate of the people at the time of Noach.

Gen 6:12 God saw the earth, and, yes, it was corrupt; for all living beings had corrupted their ways on the earth.

Here, at the time of Avraham, we do not have such an assessment. Yet, Avraham is told to leave...

Gen 12:1 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.

Get away from your kinsmen, your family and more specifically your father's home.

Haran is a city whose ruins lie within present-day Turkey. Haran first appears in the Book of Genesis as the home of Terah and his descendants, and as Abraham's temporary home. Later biblical passages list Haran among some cities and lands under the control of Assyrian rulers.

The culture was likely that of many that we are made aware of during Isra'el's wilderness journey and that of the inhabitants of the land of Can'an, paganism, multiple gods, idol worship, sacrificing to them, etc...

However, there were likely some, who did not follow this practice. We read of one, a contemporary of Avraham who feared him and was a servant to Adonai...

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of `Utz whose name was Iyov. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.

Job 1:8 Adonai asked the Adversary, "Did you notice my servant Iyov, that there's no one like him on earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and shuns evil?"

Yet, there is very little we know of his life at this time, his practices, yet there is one thing we can be confident of. That is Avraham did not know Adonai. He did not have a relationship with Him, follow Him or worship Him. However, there is one thing we do know and it may offer a clue? Avraham is a descendant of Shem, Noach's son did not dishonor his father (B'midbar (Genesis) 9:22 -23). Could it be that he came from "good stock"?

Just as Isra'el's journey in the wilderness would be the means by which Adonai would reveal Himself to them and thus they would come to know all the attributes of Adonai, 13 of them in all...

Exo 34:6 Adonai passed before him and proclaimed: "YUD-HEH-VAV-HEH!!! Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh (יהוה) [Adonai] is God, merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in grace and truth;

Exo 34:7 showing grace to the thousandth generation, forgiving offenses, crimes and sins; yet not exonerating the guilty, but causing the negative effects of the parents' offenses to be experienced by their children and grandchildren, and even by the third and fourth generations."

So to Avraham's journey would be an introduction to the one true God. Adonai would test him many times as I had already alluded to in order to refine him, prepare him for what Adonai would be calling upon him to do and thus initiate.

Stephen conveys this in his testimony to the Cohen ha Gadol...

Act 7:2 and Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to Avraham avinu in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran

Act 7:3 and said to him, 'Leave your land and your family, and go into the land that I will show you.'

Act 7:4 So he left the land of the Kasdim and lived in Haran. After his father died, God made him move to this land where you are living now.

We read of Terach dying in B'midbar (Genesis) 11:32 where it said he lived to be 205, then Adonai speaks to Avraham in 12:1...

Gen 12:1 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.

The *Tanakh* itself extols Avraham's faith ([Neh 9:7-8](#)),

Neh 9:7 " 'You are Adonai, the God who chose Avram, brought him out of Ur-Kasdim and gave him the name of Avraham.

Neh 9:8 Finding that he was faithful to you, you made a covenant with him to give the land of the Kena`ani, the Hitti, Emori and P'rizi, the Y'vusi and the Girgashi, to give it to his descendants; and you have done what you promised, because you are just.

as does Sha'ul; quoting B'midbar (Genesis) 15:6....

Rom 4:1 Then what should we say Avraham, our forefather, obtained by his own efforts?

Rom 4:2 For if Avraham came to be considered righteous by God because of legalistic observances, then he has something to boast about. But this is not how it is before God!

Rom 4:3 For what does the Tanakh say? "Avraham put his trust in God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness."

Gal 3:6 It was the same with Avraham: "He trusted in God and was faithful to him, and that was credited to his account as righteousness."

Gal 3:7 Be assured, then, that it is those who live by trusting and being faithful who are really children of Avraham.

Gal 3:8 Also the Tanakh, foreseeing that God would consider the Gentiles righteous when they live by trusting and being faithful, told the Good News to Avraham in advance by saying, "In connection with you, all the Goyim will be blessed."

this being B'midbar (Genesis) 12:3...

Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Adonai lays out the instruction he is giving to Avraham and yet it is one action that is required in order for all this to occur...

Gen 12:4 So Avram went, as Adonai had said to him, and Lot went with him. Avram was 75 years old when he left Haran.

We read of Avraham because of a step he took. He had very little information. He posed no questions that were recorded after Adonai had spoken to him. He wasn't even given a map or a destination. He was literally required to walk by faith. Adonai would show him where to go and let him know when he got there. On the journey, Adonai would reveal more to Avraham, but only after he went, only after he left the land he was living in, only after he left his kinsmen and his father's house.

We will not always know everything we need to know, however, so long as we trust in him, remain faithful to him, He will show us more. I can testify to His word. He did not show us before we left Western New York what the congregation would look like or who would be here. We first had to go and upon that action, Adonai would show us more. With each step we took, He would show us more.

Adonai is consistent in His ways. As He did with Avraham, He did with us, and therefore He will do with you.

The writer of Hebrews devotes more space to Avraham than to anyone else, giving no less than four instances of his **trusting**:

- His obeying God's call to leave home for an unknown land ([Heb_11:8](#))
- His steadfast hoping for the unseen heavenly city ([Heb_11:9-10](#), [Heb_11:13-16](#))
- His trusting God to provide an heir through Sarah despite its natural impossibility ([Heb_11:11-12](#))
- His offering that heir as a sacrifice ([Heb_11:17-19](#))

We read further of what would be made known to Avraham upon taking action and thus responding to Adonai...

Heb 11:9 By trusting, he lived as a temporary resident in the Land of the promise, as if it were not his, staying in tents with Yitz'chak and Ya'akov, who were to receive what was promised along with him.

Heb 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city with permanent foundations, of which the architect and builder is God.

The writer of Hebrews conveys that Avraham was looking forward to the promise as conveyed by Adonai. There is so much that is concentrated in those three verses of B'midbar (Genesis) that when unpacked brings forth a flood of promise and understanding. I would say Avraham could not have comprehended all that would transpire when He responded to a simple command - "go". That he would be so instrumental in Adonai's plan for redeeming His creation. Yet, there are times when we know there is something much bigger, but just can't envision what it is to look like.

Mat 22:31 And as for whether the dead are resurrected, haven't you read what God said to you,

Mat 22:32 'I am the God of Avraham, the God of Yitz'chak and the God of Ya`akov'? He is God not of the dead but of the living!"

Yeshua testified that Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov are still alive ([Mat 22:31-32](#)). When their seed, the Jewish people, come into full possession of *Eretz-Israel*, as God has promised them, the Patriarchs will be alive to inherit with them.

I believe Sha'ul conveys Avraham's initial action and thus our lives of faith as follows:

2Co 5:1 We know that when the tent which houses us here on earth is torn down, we have a permanent building from God, a building not made by human hands, to house us in heaven.

2Co 5:2 For in this tent, our earthly body, we groan with desire to have around us the home from heaven that will be ours.

2Co 5:3 With this around us we will not be found naked.

2Co 5:4 Yes, while we are in this body, we groan with the sense of being oppressed: it is not so much that we want to take something off, but rather to put something on over it; so that what must die may be swallowed up by the Life.

2Co 5:5 Moreover, it is God who has prepared us for this very thing, and as a pledge he has given us his Spirit.

2Co 5:6 So we are always confident — we know that so long as we are at home in the body, we are away from our home with the Lord;

2Co 5:7 for we live by trust, not by what we see.

2Co 5:8 We are confident, then, and would much prefer to leave our home in the body and come to our home with the Lord.

2Co 5:9 Therefore, whether at home or away from home, we try our utmost to please him;

2Co 5:10 for we must all appear before the Messiah's court of judgment, where everyone will receive the good or bad consequences of what he did while he was in the body.

Avraham communicated directly with Adonai. Today we have the essence of His presence residing within us. So, Adonai is not walking alongside us, but is doing so through us. You, who believe in Him today, have done so through accepting His son. Thus we yearn for and thus desire what cannot be seen by the naked eye, yet hope for just as Avraham hoped for.