



Torah Nuggets – Rabbin Deborah Brandt

Lech L'cha – 1st Year – Genesis 12:1-13:18

“The Fires of Testing that Make Us Vessels of Honor for His Kingdom”

Gen 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

Gen 12:2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Gen 12:4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Gen 12:5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan,

Gen 12:6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

Gen 12:7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Gen 12:8 From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. (ESV)

Chumash – Intro

A new creation – The Sidra begins a new birth of mankind, the story of Abraham and his descendants. First 2000 years from creation were the “Era of Desolation” Adam had fallen Able was murdered, Idolatry introduced, 10 generations washed away by the flood ,Tower of Babel – languages confused.

Abraham born in the year 1948 from creation. In the year 2000- 4 years from the dispersion and 6 before the death of Noah, he started to influence disciples to serve Hashem. With the emergency of Abraham the Era of Desolation had come to an end, and the Era of Torah had begun (Avodah Zarah 9a).

With Abraham there began a profound change in the spiritual nature of mankind. The plan of creation was for all human beings to have an equal share in fulfilling the Divine mission and for the Torah to be given to all mankind. But after 20 generation of failure, the privilege of being God’s Chosen People was earned by Abraham and his offspring. They would receive the Torah and they would be in the vanguard perfecting the world and bringing all people to accept the Sovereignty of the One God (Avos, direct Hashem) The Concept of Trial

Abraham did not win his new status by default, he had to prove his greatness by passing 10 tests of faith. By definition a Heavenly test is one that forces a person to choose between God's will and his own nature or understanding of what is right.

Abraham was tested by being forced to subordinate his wishes and wisdom to those of God. By doing so, he demonstrated his conviction that man's highest goal is to accept the Divine wisdom is the sole truth.

Since God knows all future events and how every person will respond to any given situation why was it necessary to test Abraham? **According to Rambam the trials were meant to display to the world how a great man obeys God. Thus when Abraham set precedents in faithful obedience by his performance under extreme pressure, they became lessons for the rest of humanity.**

Rambam – God does not impose trials that are beyond the capacity of the individual. **God tests only righteous people who will do His will, not the wicked who will disobey.**

Thus all the Torah's trial is for the benefit of those being tested. But that is only known to God. The person being tested has free choice and he must find the strength and wisdom to choose correctly, if he does, then he has translated his potential into action and made himself a greater person.

Rambam's list of Abrahams Trials (Rashi's list is different)

1. Abrahams exile from his family and homeland
2. The hunger of Canaan after God had assured him that he would become a great nation
3. The corruption of Egypt that resulted in the abduction of Sarah
4. The war with the 4 Kings
5. His marriage to Haegar after having despaired that Sarah would ever give birth
6. The commandment of circumcision
7. Abimelech's abduction of Sarah
8. Driving Haegar away after she had given birth
9. The very distasteful command to drive away Ishmael
10. The binding of Isaac on the alter Scriptures regarding Tests

We will have tests in life if we are serving God. If we never go through a test, how will we ever grow in faith and trust? The test help to reveal what is in our hearts as well. It is easy for us to serve God if everything is always easy and goes well. The test is, will we continue to serve God when we go through tests and trials? God is not concerned about our comfort, as much as He is concerned about our character.

The question is, how will we react when a test comes? Will we trust God that He is in control and even though we do not understand why we are going through the test? Will we grow bitter or better? Will we rejoice and say with Job, “Though he slay me yet I will praise him”?

Also, the greater the call, the greater the test. We see in Matthew 4 when the enemy threw everything he had at Yeshua to cause him to fall, but he did not succeed. God allowed this test and actually led him into the test via the Ruach HaKodesh who sent him into the wilderness to do battle with the enemy. **Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.** Also the test Yeshua faced in the garden before his crucifixion, where he was under so much satanic pressure that he sweated drops of blood. (Luke 22:44). It was not the Deity of Yeshua that was put to the test, but his Humanity. He was the Word made flesh, his flesh was put to the test and He defeated the enemy via the Word of YHWH.

He was called the second Adam (1 Cor. 15:45). Adam did not pass the test and caused sin and the fallen nature to be passed on to all humans (Genesis 2-3). Yeshua who had all authority and power and was well able to do what hasatan tried to trick him into doing, but he trusted in The Word and that was what He used to pass the test, The Word. Satan was trying to get him to disobey The Word, but The Word defeated hasatan. The purpose of the test was for our benefit, Yeshua was standing in the gap and undoing what Adam had done so via Yeshua we are In Him instead of In Adam. (11 Cor. 5:21)

Yes we are going to go through tests and trials in this world, but if we trust God every test will work out for our good and build the character of Messiah in our lives.

We do not get promoted in God’s service by default, the ones who get promoted are the ones who pass the test and remain faithful. We will be tested in little areas of service, before we will be promoted to greater responsibilities. There is no short cut, God is not going to trust people in leadership positions who cannot pass His tests.

Proverbs 25:4 Take away the dross from the silver, and the smith has material for a vessel;

According to Websters 1825 Dictionary Dross is;

DROSS, n. [G.]

1. The scum or extraneous matter of metals, thrown off in the process of melting.
2. Rust; crust of metals; an incrustation formed on metals by oxydation.
3. Waste matter; refuse; any worthless matter separated from the better part; impure matter.

When we allow God to get the dross out of our lives, then he has the material he can use to make us vessels for His service.

Do you need patience? Then you will be tested in the area of patience.

Do you need to learn to walk in love? Then you will be tested in the area of loving the unlovely.

Do you want to be a leader? Then you will be tested in the area of being a servant.

Are you willing to allow God to make you a vessel He can use.

2Ti 2:21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

Jer 18:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD:

Jer 18:2 "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words."

Jer 18:3 So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel.

Jer 18:4 And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

Jer 18:5 Then the word of the LORD came to me:

Jer 18:6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

The Believers Victory in all Tests and Trials

11 Corinthians 13:5-6

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test.

Revelation 2

Rev 2:1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

Rev 2:2 "'I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.

Rev 2:3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary.

Revelation 3:10

Rev 3:10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

James 1:3

Jas 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

Jas 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

Jas 1:3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

Jas 1:4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Jas 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Jas 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

Romans 5:3-4

Rom 5:3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

Rom 5:4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

Rom 5:5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Romans 8:28

Rom 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

11 Corinthians 4:17

2Co 4:17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

2Co 4:18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Romans 2:7

Rom 2:7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;

Rom 2:8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

1 Peter 1:1-16

1Pe 1:6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

1Pe 1:7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

How do you react when you go through Tests and Trials? Do you trust God, or do you question His love for you? Allow those tests to build Godly character within in.

Are we demonstrating to the world as well, how great men and woman of God, obey God?