

## Abraham's Tent:

### The First Covenantal Family

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#### 1: Fathers and sons

##### Genesis 11:26-32

(26) When Terah had lived 70 years, he begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. (27) Now this is the line of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begot Lot. (28) Haran died in the lifetime of his father Terah, in his native land, Ur of the Chaldeans. (29) Abram and Nahor took to themselves wives, the name of Abram's wife being Sarai and that of Nahor's wife Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. (30) Now Sarai was barren, she had no child.

(31) Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans for the land of Canaan; but when they had come as far as Haran, they settled there. (32) The days of Terah came to 205 years; and Terah died in Haran.

##### בראשית י"א:כ"ו-ל"ב

(כו) וַיְחַי־תֵּרַח שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה וַיֻּלְדֵי אֶת־  
אֲבָרָם אֶת־נְחֹר וְאֶת־הָרָן. (כז) וְאֵלֶּה  
תּוֹלְדֹת תֵּרַח תֵּרַח הוֹלִיד אֶת־אֲבָרָם אֶת־  
נְחֹר וְאֶת־הָרָן וְהָרָן הוֹלִיד אֶת־לוֹט. (כח)  
וַיָּמָת הָרָן עַל־פְּנֵי תֵּרַח אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹלְדֹתוֹ  
בְּאֹר כַּשְׂדִּים. (כט) וַיִּקַּח אֲבָרָם וְנְחֹר  
לָהֶם נָשִׁים שֵׁם אִשְׁת־אֲבָרָם שָׂרַי וְשֵׁם  
אִשְׁת־נְחֹר מִלְכָּה בַת־הָרָן אָבִי־מִלְכָּה וְאָבִי  
יִסְכָּה. (ל) וַתְּהִי שָׂרַי עֲקָרָה אִין לָהּ וְלֹד:

(לא) וַיִּקַּח תֵּרַח אֶת־אֲבָרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט  
בְּוֹהֲרוֹ בְּוֹבְנוֹ וְאֶת־שָׂרַי כַּלְתּוֹ אִשְׁת־אֲבָרָם  
בְּנוֹ וַיֵּצְאוּ אֹתָם מֵאֹר כַּשְׂדִּים לְלַכַּת אֶרֶץ  
כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־חָרָן וַיָּשְׁבוּ שָׁם. (לב) וַיְהִי  
יְמֵי־תֵּרַח חֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וּמֵאֹתַיִם שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת  
תֵּרַח בְּחָרָן. {פ}

#### 2: Enter: God

##### Genesis 12:1-3

(1) The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.

(2) I will make of you a great nation,  
And I will bless you;

I will make your name great,  
And you shall be a blessing.

(3) I will bless those who bless you  
And curse him that curses you;  
And all the families of the earth  
Shall bless themselves by you."

##### בראשית י"ב:א'-ג'

(א) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אֲבָרָם לֵךְ־  
לָהּ מֵאֶרֶץְךָ וּמִמּוֹלְדֹתֶיךָ וּמִבֵּית  
אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרַאֲךָ.  
(ב) וְאָעֲשֶׂה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאֲבָרְכָהּ  
וְאֲגַדְלָהּ שְׁמֶךָ וְהָיָה בְרָכָה.  
(ג) וְאֲבָרְכָהּ מִבְּרַכְיָהּ וּמִקְלָלָהּ  
אֲאֹר וְנִבְרַכְנוּ בָּהּ כָּל מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הָאָדָמָה.

### 3. Abram's companions

#### Genesis 12:4-7

(4) Abram went forth as the LORD had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. (5) Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the wealth that they had amassed, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran; and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in the land of Canaan, (6) Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, at the terebinth of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land. (7) The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will assign this land to your offspring." And he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

#### בראשית י"ב:ד-ז

(ד) ויגלה אברם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בְּן־חַמֶּשׁ שָׁנַיִם וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן: (ה) וַיִּקַּח אֲבָרָם אֶת־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בְּן־אָחִיו וְאֶת־כָּל־רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת־הַנַּפְשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עִשְׂוּ בְּחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ לְלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן: (ו) וַיַּעֲבֹר אֲבָרָם בְּאֶרֶץ עַד מְקוֹם שָׁכֵם עַד אֵלֶּן מוֹרְהָ וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אָז בְּאֶרֶץ: (ז) וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לִוְרָעָה אַתָּה אֶת־הָאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיְבֹן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאָה אֵלָיו:

### 4. Lot's lot

#### Genesis 13:5-13

(5) Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, (6) so that the land could not support them staying together; for their possessions were so great that they could not remain together. (7) And there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and those of Lot's cattle.— The Canaanites and Perizzites were then dwelling in the land.— (8) Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, between my herdsmen and yours, for we are kinsmen. (9) Is not the whole land before you? Let us separate: if you go north, I will go south; and if you go south, I will go north." (10) Lot looked about him and saw how well watered was the whole plain of the Jordan, all of it—this was before the LORD had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—all the way to Zoar, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (11) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they parted from each other; (12) Abram remained in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the Plain, pitching his tents near Sodom. (13) Now the inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked sinners against the LORD.

#### בראשית י"ג:ה-י"ג

(ה) וְגַם־לְלוֹט הָיָה אֲבָרָם הָיָה צֹאן וּבָקָר וְאֹהֲלִים: (ו) וְלֹא־נִשְׂא אִתָּם הָאֶרֶץ לְשִׁבְתָּ יַחְדָּו כִּי־הָיָה רְכוּשָׁם רָב וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְשִׁבְתָּ יַחְדָּו: (ז) וַיְהִי־רִיב בֵּין רְעֵי מִקְנֵה־אַבְרָם וּבֵין רְעֵי מִקְנֵה־לוֹט וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי אֲזַי שָׁב בְּאֶרֶץ: (ח) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבָרָם אֶל־לוֹט אֲלֵ־נָא תְּהִי מְרִיבָה בֵּינֵינוּ וּבֵינֶיךָ וּבֵין רְעֵי וּבֵין רְעֵיךָ כִּי־אֲנֹשִׁים אַחִים אֲנַחְנוּ: (ט) הֲלֹא כָל־הָאֶרֶץ לְפָנֶיךָ הַפְּרָדָה נָא מֵעַלִּי אִם־הַשְׂמַמָּל וְאִימָנָה וְאִם־הַיְמִין וְאִם־הַיְמִינָה: (י) וַיִּשְׂא־לוֹט אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת־כָּל־כַּפְּרֵי הַיַּרְדֵּן כִּי כָלָה מִשְׁקָה לְפָנָיו שַׁחַת יְהוָה אֶת־סֹדֶם וְאֶת־עַמּוֹרָה כְּגוֹן־יְהוָה כְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּאַכָּה צֹעֵר: (יא) וַיִּבְחַר־לוֹ לוֹט אֶת כָּל־כַּפְּרֵי הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיֵּסַע לוֹט מִקְדָּם וַיִּפְרְדוּ אִישׁ מֵעַל אָחִיו: (יב) אֲבָרָם יָשָׁב בְּאֶרֶץ־כְּנָעַן וְלוֹט יָשָׁב בְּעָרֵי הַכַּפֹּר וַיֵּאָהֵל עַד־סֹדֶם: (יג) וְאַנְשֵׁי סֹדֶם רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה מְאֹד:

#### Genesis 14:14

(14) When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he mustered his retainers, born into his household, numbering three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

#### בראשית י"ד:י"ד

(יד) וַיִּשְׁמַע אֲבָרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אָחִיו וַיֵּרַק אֶת־חַנְיָכָיו יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ שְׂמֹנֶה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וַיִּרְדָּף עַד־דָּן:

### 5: Abraham's sister/wife

#### Genesis 12:11-20

(11) As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. (12) If the Egyptians see you, and think, 'She is his wife,' they will kill me and let you live. (13) Please say that you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may remain alive thanks to you." (14) When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was. (15) Pharaoh's courtiers saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace. (16) And because of her, it went well with Abram; he acquired sheep, oxen, asses, male and female slaves, she-asses, and camels. (17) But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his household with mighty plagues **on account of Sarai, the wife of Abram**....(20) And Pharaoh put men in charge of him, and they sent him off with his wife and all that he possessed.

#### בראשית י"ב:י"א-כ'

(יא) וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיב לְבוֹא מִצְרָיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ הִנֵּה־נָא יִדְעוּתִי כִּי אִשָּׁה יִפְתַּח־מַרְאֵה אֹתִי: (יב) וְהָיָה כִּי־יִרְאוּ אֹתָהּ הַמִּצְרָיִם וְאָמְרוּ אִשְׁתּוֹ זֹאת וְהָרְגוּ אֹתִי וְאַתָּה יִחְיֶי: (יג) אָמַרְי־נָא אַחְתִּי אָתָּה לְמַעַן יִיטַב־לִי בְעַבְדוֹרָהּ וְחִיְתָה נַפְשִׁי בְגִלְגָּלָהּ: (יד) וַיְהִי כַּבּוֹא אַבְרָם מִצְרָיִם וַיִּרְאוּ הַמִּצְרָיִם אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה כִּי־יָפָה הִוא מְאֹד: (טו) וַיִּרְאוּ אֹתָהּ שָׂרַי פְּרַעֲה וַיְהַלְלוּ אֹתָהּ אֶל־פְּרַעֲה וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה בַּיִת פְּרַעֲה: (טז) וּלְאַבְרָם הֵיטִיב בְּעַבְדוֹרָהּ וַיְהִי־לּוֹ צֹאן־וּבָקָר וַחֲמֹרִים וְעַבְדִּים וְשִׁפְחֹת וְאַתְנֹת וְגַמְלִים: (יז) וַיִּגְלַע יְהוָה אֶת־פְּרַעֲה נְגַעִים גְּדֹלִים וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ עַל־דְּבַר שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ אַבְרָם... (יח) וַיִּצְוּ עָלָיו פְּרַעֲה אַנְשִׁים וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ:

### 6: Abraham's men

#### Genesis 14:21-24

(21) Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the possessions for yourself." (22) But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth: (23) I will not take so much as a thread or a sandal strap of what is yours; you shall not say, 'It is I who made Abram rich.' (24) For me, nothing but what my servants have used up; as for the share of the men who went with me—Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre—let them take their share."

#### בראשית י"ד:כ"א-כ"ד

(כא) וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ־סֹדָם אֶל־אַבְרָם תּוֹנִי לִי הַנָּפֶשׁ וְהָרֶכֶשׁ קַח־לָךְ: (כב) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־מֶלֶךְ סֹדָם הִרְמַתִּי יָדִי אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי עֲלִיּוֹן קִנְיָה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: (כג) אִם־מַחוּט וְעֵד שְׂרוּד־נֶעַל וְאִם־אֶקַּח מִכָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לָךְ וְלֹא תֹאמַר אֲנִי הִעֲשֵׂרְתִּי אֶת־אַבְרָם: (כד) בְּלַעֲדֵי רַק אֲשֶׁר אָכְלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וְחִלְקֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הָלְכוּ אִתִּי עִנְרֵי אֲשֶׁכַל וּמִמְרֵא הֵם יִקְחוּ חִלְקָם: {ס}

## 7: The handmaiden and the first-born son

### Genesis 16:1-16

(1) Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. (2) And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, the LORD has kept me from bearing. Consort with my maid; perhaps I shall have a son through her." And Abram heeded Sarai's request. (3) So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian—after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan ten years—and gave her to her husband Abram as concubine. (4) He cohabited with Hagar and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her esteem. (5) And Sarai said to Abram, "The wrong done me is your fault! I myself put my maid in your bosom; now that she sees that she is pregnant, I am lowered in her esteem. The LORD decide between you and me!" (6) Abram said to Sarai, "Your maid is in your hands. Deal with her as you think right." Then Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from her...(15) Hagar bore a son to Abram, and Abram gave the son that Hagar bore him the name Ishmael.

### בראשית ט"ז:א-ט"ו

(א) וְשָׂרָי אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם לֹא יָלְדָה לוֹ וְלָהּ שִׁפְחָה מִצְרַיִת וּשְׁמֶהָ הָגָר: (ב) וּתְאֵמֶר שָׂרָי אֶל-אַבְרָם הִנֵּה-נָא עֲצָרְנִי יְהוָה מִלְדֹת בְּאִנְיָ אֶל-שִׁפְחָתִי אוּלַי אֲבִנֶה מִמֶּנָּה וְיִשְׁמַע אַבְרָם לְקוֹל שָׂרָי: (ג) וּתְקַח שָׂרָי אֵשֶׁת-אַבְרָם אֶת-הָגָר הַמִּצְרַיִת שִׁפְחָתָהּ מִקִּץ עֶשְׂרֵי שָׁנִים לְשֹׁבֹת אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וּתְתֵן אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָם אִישָׁהּ לֹא לְאִשָּׁה: (ד) וַיְבֵא אֶל-הָגָר וּתְהַר וּתְרָא כִּי הָרְתָהּ וּתְקַל גְּבִרְתָּהּ בְּעֵינֶיהָ: (ה) וּתְאֵמֶר שָׂרָי אֶל-אַבְרָם חֲמָסִי עָלֶיךָ אֲנֹכִי נָתַתִּי שִׁפְחָתִי בְּחִיקָהּ וּתְרָא כִּי הָרְתָהּ וְאֶקַּל בְּעֵינֶיהָ יִשְׁפֹּט יְהוָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ: (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל-שָׂרָי הִנֵּה שִׁפְחָתְךָ בְּיָדֶךָ עֲשִׂי-לָהּ הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ וּתְעַנֶּה שָׂרָי וּתְבָרַח מִפְּנֵיהֶּ... (טו) וּתְלֵד הָגָר לְאַבְרָם בֶּן וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָם שֵׁם-בְּנוֹ אֶשְׂרָיִלְדָה הָגָר יִשְׁמָעֵאל:

## 8: The promise of Isaac

### Genesis 17:5-21

(5) And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations...(15) And God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah. (16) I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall issue from her." (17) Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed, as he said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man a hundred years old, or can Sarah bear a child at ninety?" (18) And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live by Your favor!" (19) God said, "Nevertheless, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac; and I will maintain My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring to come. (20) As for Ishmael, I have heeded you. I hereby bless him. I will make him fertile and exceedingly numerous. He shall be the father of twelve chieftains, and I will make of him a great nation. (21) But My covenant I will maintain with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year."

### בראשית י"ז:ה-כ"א

(ה) וְלֹא-יִקְרָא עוֹד אֶת-שְׁמֶךָ אַבְרָם וְהָיָה שְׁמֶךָ אַבְרָהָם כִּי אֲבִי-הַמְּנוֹן גּוֹיִם נִתְּתִיךָ... (טו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְרָהָם שָׂרָי אִשְׁתְּךָ לֹא-תִקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמֶהּ שָׂרָי כִּי שָׂרָה שְׁמָהּ: (טז) וּבִרְכָתִי אֹתָהּ וְגַם נָתַתִּי מִמֶּנָּה לָּךְ בֶּן וּבִרְכָתֶיהָ וְהָיְתָה לְגוֹלִים מְלֻכֵי עַמִּים מִמֶּנָּה יִהְיוּ: (יז) וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָהָם עַל-פָּנָיו וַיִּצְחַק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ הֲלִבְנֵי מֵאָה-שָׁנָה יוֹלֵד וְאִם-שָׂרָה הִבְתִּיתִּי שְׂעִים שָׁנָה תֵּלֵד: (יח) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים לֹא יִשְׁמָעֵאל יִחִיָּה לְפָנֶיךָ: (יט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶבְלִ שָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּךָ יִלְדֶת לָּךְ בֶּן וַיִּקְרָאתָ אֶת-שְׁמוֹ יִצְחָק וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתּוֹ לְבְרִית עוֹלָם לְזֶרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו: (כ) וְלִישְׁמָעֵאל שִׁמְעַתִּיךָ הִנֵּה וּבִרְכָתִי אֹתוֹ וְהִפְרִיתִי אֹתוֹ וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֹתוֹ בְּמֵאָד מֵאָד שָׁנִים עֶשְׂרֵי נְשִׂאִים יוֹלִיד וּנְתַתִּיו לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל: (כא) וְאֶת-בְּרִיתִי אֶקִּים אֶת-יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד לָּךְ שָׂרָה לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה בַּשָּׁנָה הָאֲחֵרָת:

## 9: One son too many?

### Genesis 21:1-7

(1) The LORD took note of Sarah as He had promised, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. (2) Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken. (3) Abraham gave his newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac. (4) And when his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. (5) Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. (6) Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter; everyone who hears will laugh with me." (7) And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham That Sarah would suckle children! Yet I have borne a son in his old age."

### Genesis 21:9-14

(9) Sarah saw the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham playing. (10) She said to Abraham, "Cast out that slave-woman and her son, for the son of that slave shall not share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." (11) The matter distressed Abraham greatly, for it concerned a son of his. (12) But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed over the boy or your slave; whatever Sarah tells you, do as she says, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be continued for you. (13) As for the son of the slave-woman, I will make a nation of him, too, for he is your seed." (14) Early next morning Abraham took some bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar. He placed them over her shoulder, together with the child, and sent her away. And she wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

### בראשית כ"א:א'-ז'

(א) ויהוה פקד את שרה כאשר אמר ויעש יהוה לשרה כאשר דבר: (ב) ותהר ותלד שרה לאברהם בן לזקניו למועד אשר דבר אתו אלהים: (ג) ויקרא אברהם את שם בן הנולד לו אשר ילדה לו שרה יצחק: (ד) וימל אברהם את יצחק בנו בן שמונת ימים כאשר צוה אתו אלהים: (ה) ואברהם בן מאת שנה בהולד לו את יצחק בנו: (ו) ותאמר שרה צחק עשה לי אלהים כל השמע יצחק לי: (ז) ותאמר מי מלל לאברהם היניקה בנים שרה כייילדתי בן לזקניו:

### בראשית כ"א:ט'-י"ד

(ט) ותרא שרה את בן הגר המצרית אשר ילדה לאברהם מצחק: (י) ותאמר לאברהם גרש האמה הזאת ואת בנה כי לא יירש בן האמה הזאת עם בני עם יצחק: (יא) וירע הדבר מאד בעיני אברהם על אודת בנו: (יב) ויאמר אלהים אל אברהם אל ירע בעיניך על הנער ועל אמתך כל אשר תאמר אליך שרה שמע בקלה כי ביצחק יקרא לה זרע: (יג) וגם את בן האמה לגוי אשר ימנו כי זרעה הוא: (יד) וישכם אברהם ובבקר ויקח לחם והמת מים ויתן אל הגר שם על שכמה ואת היילד וישלחה ותלה ותתע במדבר באר שבע:

## 10: Humanity

### Genesis 18:1-15

(1) The LORD appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre; he was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot. (2) Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them and, bowing to the ground, (3) he said, “My lords, if it please you, do not go on past your servant. (4) Let a little water be brought; bathe your feet and recline under the tree. (5) And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves; then go on—seeing that you have come your servant’s way.” They replied, “Do as you have said.” (6) Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Quick, three *seahs* of choice flour! Knead and make cakes!” (7) Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a calf, tender and choice, and gave it to a servant-boy, who hastened to prepare it. (8) He took curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared and set these before them; and he waited on them under the tree as they ate.

### Genesis 18:17-25

(17) Now the LORD had said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, (18) since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation and all the nations of the earth are to bless themselves by him? (19) For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is just and right, in order that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him.” ... (23) Abraham came forward and said, “Will You sweep away the innocent along with the guilty? (24) What if there should be fifty innocent within the city; will You then wipe out the place and not forgive it for the sake of the innocent fifty who are in it? (25) Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”

### בראשית י"ח:א-ט"ו

(א) וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵא  
וְהוּא יָשָׁב פֶּתַח-הָאֵהָל כְּתָם הַיּוֹם. (ב)  
וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים  
נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיֵּרָץ לִקְרֹאתָם מִפֶּתַח  
הָאֵהָל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה. (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי  
אִם-נָא מְצֹאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֵל-נָא תַעֲבֹר  
מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ. (ד) יִקַּח-נָא מֵעֵט-מַיִם  
וְרַחֲצֵנוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֵנוּ תַּחַת הָעֵץ. (ה)  
וְאָקֹחַ פַּת-לֶחֶם וְסַעֲדֵנוּ לְבָכֶם אַחֲרַי  
תַּעֲבֹרוּ כִּי-עַל-כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל-עַבְדְּכֶם  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ. (ו)  
וַיַּמְהַר אַבְרָהָם הָאֵהָלָה אֶל-שָׂרָה  
וַיֹּאמֶר מַה־רָא שְׁלֹשׁ סְאִים קָמַח סֹלֶת  
לְיֹשֵׁי וְעֲשֵׂי עֲגוֹת. (ז) וְאֶל-הַעֲבָדָה רָץ  
אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח בֶּן-בְּקָרָה רֶדֶד וְטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן  
אֶל-הַנְּעָר וַיַּמְהַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ. (ח)  
וַיִּקַּח חֲמָאָה וְחֹלֵב וּבֹן-הַבְּקָרָה אֲשֶׁר  
עָשָׂה וַיִּתֵּן לַפְּנֵיהֶם וְהוּא-עֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם  
תַּחַת הָעֵץ וַיֹּאכְלוּ.

### בראשית י"ח:י"ז-כ"ה

(יז) וַיְהִינָה אָמַר הַמְּכַסֶּה אֲנִי  
מְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה. (יח)  
וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוּ יְהִיָּה לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְעַצּוֹם  
וְנִבְרָכוּ-בּוֹ כָּל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ. (יט) כִּי  
יְדַעְתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוָה אֶת-בְּנָיו  
וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשִׁמְרוּ דְרָגַת יְהוָה  
לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הִבִּיא  
יְהוָה עַל-אַבְרָהָם אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּר  
עָלָיו... (כג) וַיִּגַּשׁ אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֵל  
תִּסְפֶּה צְדִיק עִם-רָשָׁע. (כד) אוּלַּי יֵשׁ  
חַמְשִׁים צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר הָאֵל  
תִּסְפֶּה וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא לְמָקוֹם לְמַעַן  
חַמְשִׁים הַצְּדִיקִים אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבָּהּ. (כה)  
חֲלָלָה לָּהּ מַעֲשֵׂת וּפְדֻבָּר הָיָה לְהַמִּית  
צְדִיק עִם-רָשָׁע וְהִנֵּה כְּצְדִיק כָּרָשָׁע  
חֲלָלָה לָּהּ הַשְּׁפָט כָּל-הָאָרֶץ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה  
מִשְׁפָּט.

## 11: God, again

Genesis 22:1-12

(1) Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, “Abraham,” and he answered, “**Here I am.**” (2) And He said, “Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you **love**, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you.”

(3) So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him....(6) Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone and the knife; and the two walked off together.

(7) Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, “**Father!**” And he answered, “**Yes, my son.**” And he said, “Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?” (8) And Abraham said, “God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them walked on **together**.

(9) They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. (10) And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. (11) Then an angel of the LORD called to him from heaven: “Abraham! Abraham!” And he answered, “Here I am.” (12) And he said, “Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me.”

בראשית כ"ב:א'-י"ב

(א) וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי: (ב) וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יְחִידָהּ אֲשֶׁר־אַהַבְתָּ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶתֶד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלֶיךָ:

(ג) וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם בְּבֹקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת־חֲמֹרוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אִתּוֹ וְאֶת יִצְחָק בְּנֵו וַיִּבְקַע עֵצִי עֲלָהּ וַיִּקֶּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים... (ו) וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵצֵי הָעֹלָה וַיִּשֶׂם עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנֵו וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַמַּאֲכֵלֶת וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו:

(ז) וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהַעֲצִים וְאֵיךְ הַשֶּׁה לְעֹלָה: (ח) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֵלָהִים יְרָאֵה־לּוֹ הַשֶּׁה לְעֹלָה בְנִי וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו:

(ט) וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְנֶן שָׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֶה אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנֵו וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל לְעֵצִים: (י) וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַמַּאֲכֵלֶת לְשַׁחֵט אֶת־בְּנֵו:

(יא) וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מִלְּאָהּ יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי: (יב) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תְּשַׁלַּח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנְּעָר וְאֶל־תַּעַשׂ לּוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־יְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתֶּה וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יְחִידָהּ מִמֶּנִּי:

## 12: Consequences

### Genesis 22:14-19

(14) And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, “On the mount of the LORD there is vision.” (15) The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, (16) and said, “By Myself I swear, the LORD declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one, (17) I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. (18) All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command.”

(19) Abraham then returned to his servants, and they departed together for Beer-sheba; and Abraham stayed in Beer-sheba.

### Genesis 23:1-2

(1) Sarah’s lifetime—the span of Sarah’s life—came to one hundred and twenty-seven years. (2) Sarah died in Kiriath-arba—now Hebron—in the land of Canaan; and Abraham proceeded to mourn for Sarah and to bewail her.

### Genesis 26:1-5

(1) There was a famine in the land—aside from the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham—and Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in Gerar. (2) The LORD had appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land which I point out to you. (3) Reside in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; I will assign all these lands to you and to your heirs, fulfilling the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. (4) I will make your heirs as numerous as the stars of heaven, and assign to your heirs all these lands, so that all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your heirs— (5) inasmuch as Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge: My commandments, My laws, and My teachings.”

### בראשית כ"ב:י"ד-י"ט

(יד) וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שְׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא יְהוָה וַיִּרְאֶה וְאִשְׁרֵי־אֱמֹר הַיּוֹם בְּהַר יְהוָה יִרְאֶה: (טו) וַיִּקְרָא מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָהָם שְׁנֵית מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם: (טז) וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֵי אֶת־יְחִידָה: (יז) כִּי־בָרַךְ אַבְרָהָם וְהִרְבָּה אַרְבֵּה אֶת־זַרְעוֹ כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכַחֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שַׁפְתַּי הַיָּם וַיִּרְשׁ זַרְעוֹ אֶת שְׁעַר אֲבִיּוֹ: (יח) וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזַרְעוֹ כָּל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ עֲלֵיב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי:

(יט) וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נְעָרָיו וַיִּקְמוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֶל־בְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם בְּבְאֵר שָׁבַע: {פ}

### בראשית כ"ג:א'-ב'

(א) וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשֶׁבַע שָׁנִים שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה: (ב) וַתָּמַת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבַּע הוּא חֶבְרוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיְבֹא אַבְרָהָם לִסְפֹּד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבַכְתָּהּ:

### בראשית כ"ו:א'-ה'

(א) וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ מִלְכַד הָרַעַב הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בַיָּמֵי אַבְרָהָם וַיֵּלֶךְ יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבִּימֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ־פְּלִשְׁתִּים גְּרָרָה: (ב) וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהֵי־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תֵּרַד מִצְרַיִמָה שְׁכֵן בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר אֵלֶיךָ: (ג) גֹּוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְאֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ וְאַבְרָכְךָ כִּי־לָהּ וּלְזַרְעוֹ אֶתְּנֶן אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְהִקְמַתִי אֶת־הַשְּׂבֻלָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם אַבְיָה: (ד) וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶת־זַרְעוֹ כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנָתַתִּי לְזַרְעוֹ אֶת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזַרְעוֹ כָּל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ: (ה) עֲלֵיב אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמֵרַתִּי מִצְוֹתַי חֻקוֹתַי וְתוֹרוֹתַי:



### 13: The space between us

#### **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, “To Bless the Space Between Us”:**

Abraham was chosen *in order to be a father*. Indeed Abraham’s original name, *Av ram*, means “mighty father”, and his enlarged name, Avraham, means “father of many nations”.

No sooner do we notice this than we recall that the first person in history to be given a proper name was *Chavah*, Eve, because, said Adam, “she is the mother of all life.” Note that motherhood is drawn attention to in the Torah long before fatherhood...The reason is that motherhood is a biological phenomenon... Fatherhood is a cultural phenomenon...

This emphasis on parenthood..is absolutely central to Jewish spirituality, because what Abrahamic monotheism brought into the world was not just a mathematical reduction of the number of gods from many to one. The God of Israel is not primarily the God of the scientists who set the universe into motion with the Big Bang. It is not the God of the philosophers...Nor is it even the God of the mystics, the Ein Sof, the Infinity that frames our finitude. **The God of Israel is *the God who loves us and cares for us as a parent loves for and cares for a child.***...

Thus our relationship with God is deeply connected with our relationship with our parents, and our understanding of God is deepened if we have had the blessing of children...

All of which makes the story of Abraham very hard to understand for two reasons. **The first is that *Abraham was the son told by God to leave his father*: “Leave your land, your birthplace and your father’s house.”** **The second is that *Abraham was the father told by God to sacrifice his son*:...**How can this make sense? It is hard enough to understand God commanding these things of anyone. How much more so given that God chose Abraham specifically to become a role model of the parent-child, father-son relationship.

The Torah is teaching us something fundamental and counter-intuitive. ***There has to be separation before there can be connection. We have to have the space to be ourselves if we are to be good children to our parents, and we have to allow our children the space to be themselves if we are to be good parents....***

Likewise in the case of the binding of Isaac. I have long argued **that the point of the story is not that Abraham loved God enough to sacrifice his son, but rather that God was teaching Abraham that *we do not own our children, however much we love them...First separate, then join. First individuate, then relate.*** That is one of the fundamentals of Jewish spirituality. **We are not God. God is not us. It is the clarity of the boundaries between heaven and earth that allow us to have a healthy relationship with God...** God loves us as a parent loves a child – *but a parent who truly loves their child makes space for the child to develop his or her own identity.* It is the space we create for one another that allows love to be like sunlight to a flower, not like a tree to the plants that grow beneath. **The role of love, human and Divine, is, in the lovely phrase of Irish poet John O’Donohue, “to bless the space between us”.**