

October 27, 2012

Lech Lecha (Genesis 12:1-17:27)

So many questions arose this week. Why did God choose Abram (later in the parashah to be renamed Abraham) to send from his land to Canaan? Why did Abram simply pick up and go? Does the fact that the text gives us such a fragmentary tale mean that Abram went without asking a single question? Or does it just mean that the questions he asked were less important than the fact that he went.

How did God speak to Abram? How did Abram know to listen? Did they have an already established relationship? And if they didn't, when the text tells us that Abram built an altar to God and invoked God's name, how did Abram know what that name was? When God appeared to Abram, after the journey began, in what form did God appear?

Later, how is it that Hagar seems to be the first woman in the Torah to speak with God, and the first person in the Torah to be visited by an angel?

We discussed all these and a number of other questions, all of which have resonances not only to this story, but throughout the rest of the Torah and even into other parts of the Tanakh as a whole.