

10-28-23 To Roeh Israel Abilene– Lech L'Cha (go forth, yourself)
Torah Portion; Genesis 12:1-17:27
Haftarah: Isa 40:27-41:16
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: 1 Cor 10:18-22

Come Completely out of Satanism!

Central question of this message: Are you celebrating or even recognizing a Satanic holy day?

This parashah takes its name from the command given by G-d to Avram in the city of Haran, as recorded in Genesis chapter 12.

Gen 12:1-3

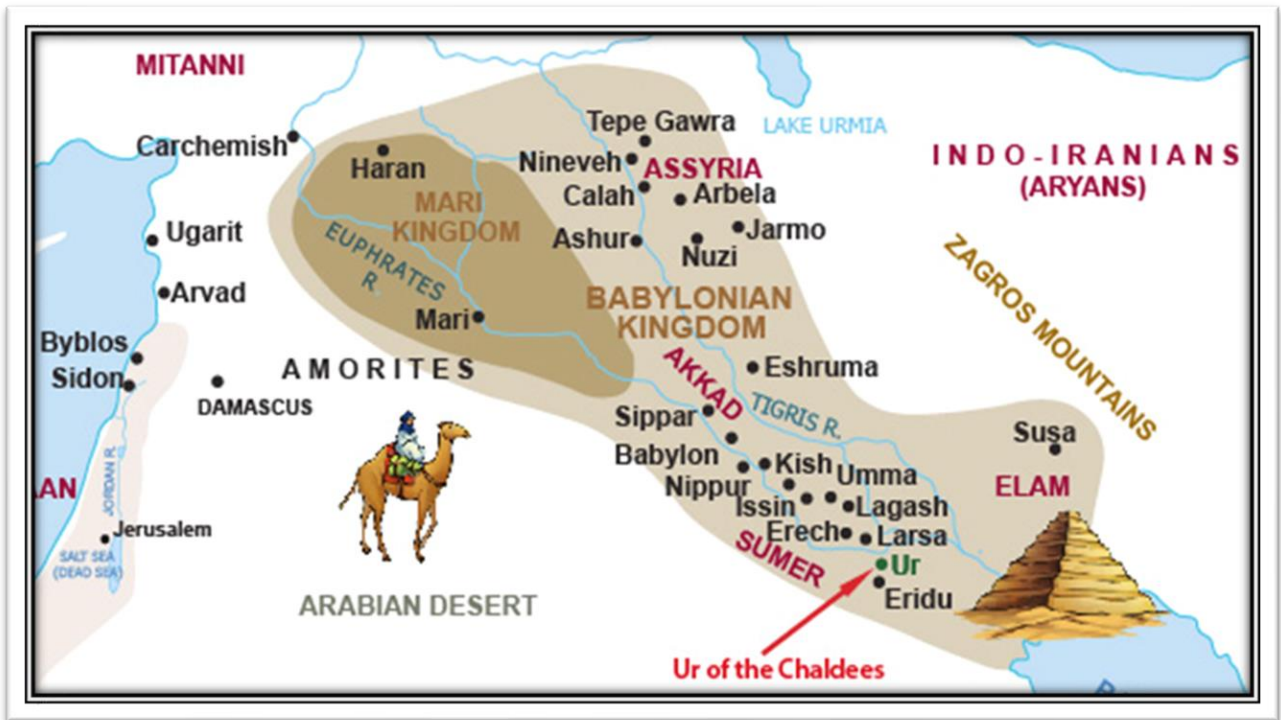
Now the LORD said to Avram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	אֶל-	אַבְרָם	לֵךְ-	לֵךְ	12:1
Now had said	the Lord	unto	Abram,	Get	thee	
<u>559</u>	<u>3068</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>3212</u>	<u>3807a</u>	
מֵאֶרְצָךְ	וּמִמְּוֹלַדְתְּךָ	וּמִבֵּית	אָבִיךָ			
out of thy country,	and from thy kindred,	and from house,	thy father's			
<u>776</u>	<u>4138</u>	<u>1004</u>	<u>1</u>			
אֶל-	הָאֶרֶץ	אֲשֶׁר	אֶרְאֶכֶ:			
unto	a land	that	I will shew thee:			
<u>413</u>	<u>776</u>	<u>834</u>	<u>7200</u>			
וַיַּעַשׂ	לְגוֹי	גָּדוֹל	וַאֲבָרְכְּךָ			2
And I will make of thee	a nation,	great	and I will bless thee,			
<u>6213</u>	<u>1471</u>	<u>1419</u>	<u>1288</u>			
וַאֲגַדְלָהּ	שְׁמִיךָ	וְהָיָה	בְּרִכָּה:			
and make great;	thy name	and thou shalt be	a blessing:			
<u>1431</u>	<u>8034</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1293</u>			
וַאֲבָרְכָהּ	מִבְּרַכֶּיךָ	וּמִקְלָלֶיךָ				3
And I will bless	them that bless thee,	and him that curseth thee:				
<u>1288</u>	<u>1288</u>	<u>7043</u>				
אָאָר	וְנִבְרְכוּ	בְּךָ	כָּל	מִשְׁפַּחַת	הָאֲדָמָה:	
curse	and shall be blessed.	in thee	all	families of	the earth	
<u>779</u>	<u>1288</u>	<u>871a</u>	<u>3605</u>	<u>4940</u>	<u>127</u>	

For us to properly understand what is happening here, we must back up a bit to last week's parashah, to obtain more of the story.

In the previous parasha, we find that Terah (Abraham's father), and the entire family were living in the land of the Chaldeans. Although Ur is today many miles inland, at some ancient time, it was a coastal city, at the mouth of the Euphrates on the Persian Gulf. What we see today is the

result of massive erosion of the topsoil and its deposition into the sea, due to poor land management by people who are poor stewards of the land.



Ancient historians tell us that the “Kasdim” - the people of this area also called the “Chaldeans”—taught Terah and his sons idolatry. Terah, they report, then took his son Avram, Sarai and Lot and set out to go to Canaan. But they fell short of making the entire trip. They went as far as Haran, and settled there.

That historical account is consistent with the final passage in last week’s parasha:

Gen 11:31-32

And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Avram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.

So, it is clear that the call by G-d to leave Ur came first to Terah. For Terah is the one who took his family out of Ur. Terah, as the patriarch of the family wouldn't have been part of a caravan led by his son Avram.

As you can see from the map, Haran is a fair distance from Ur, but still on the same side of the Euphrates River. Not only did Terah fail to take his family to Canaan, he didn't even cross the Euphrates.

It is understandable that Terah would not wish to make a straight-line trip to Canaan, since that would require crossing a wide desert. But once in Haran, Terah could have turned southwest on the well-established trade route and finished the journey.

Haran is located in what is today southern Turkey, just north of its border with Syria. At the time of Terah, Haran lay on the road from Antioch to Nineveh. It is likely that Jonah traveled through Haran on his missionary journey to prophecy to Nineveh generations later.

Why did Terah only go to Haran, and not then take the road that ran westward from there to Canaan? We don't know. But we do know that after the death of Terah in Haran, G-d urged Avram to *continue the journey* – to the same location – and when Avram got there, G-d's plan for the Jewish people was once again moving forward.

There is Scriptural support that this call to Avram found in the opening verse of today's parasha was actually the “second call”. We have already seen that in some cases the Masoretic pointing of the Torah is suspect. They pointed the words to be consistent with their own theological constructs, and did not allow the Hebrew text to speak directly, without any further “help.”

If I simply say the Hebrew words translated as “You get” as they appear, without Masoretic pointing, I would legitimately say “*l'cha – l'cha*”. That means “to you... TO YOU!” Doubling a word in Hebrew provides great emphasis of that concept. This would mean G-d's instruction to Avram was given with significant force, and carried with it the idea that the instructions were personal to Avram “not to your father this time...”.

What I see, when I see the command to Avram, are the very words that must have been spoken in context to Terah, in the city of Ur. These words,

now spoken to Avram, immediately made sense to Avram. *Because he had heard them before.*

There is proof of this assertion. It comes from the trial of Stephen, after Stephen was telling the Jews of the truth of Messiah, and was defeating their arguments. They then gathered some false witnesses, and then took Stephen before the Council (bet din). Here is the account of his defense.

Acts 7:1-5

7 And the high priest said, "Are these things so?" 2 And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, 3 and said to him,' Depart from your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you.' 4 "Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and settled in Haran. And from there, after his father died, God removed him into this country in which you are now living.

Stephen's defense before the beit din shows that a proper account of Jewish history, well understood more than 2,000 years ago, was that the

instructions directly to Avram in Haran were a direct repetition of the instructions to his father Terah, which both men heard in the city of Ur.

Avram was not only commanded to go to the place that G-d would show him as the Promised Land, but Avram was also commanded to remove himself from the deep pagan influences of the Chaldean society, and particularly the idolatry of the city of Ur.

In a very real way, Avram was being separated-out to be sanctified to a special purpose, and to begin the process of creating a people reflective of G-d's holiness which will be advanced by Moses, and then further advanced by Messiah Himself.

Avram was directed to "come out" from a pagan society. Moses was directed to bring out the people from Egyptian society who had in several generations lost their way. They had turned from what Joseph had shown them of G-d, into idolatry slavery, and finally violence and murder. G-d knows that His people cannot best serve him and become salt and light in this world if we are immersed in an evil society. And Messiah shall, in an even greater way than Moses did, one day rescue us from an ever-darkening world, leaving our oppressors dead. In that day the promise given to Israel will be fulfilled.

Isa 66:15-17

15 For behold, the Lord will come in fire
And His chariots like the whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For the Lord will execute judgment by fire
And by His sword on all flesh,
And those slain by the Lord will be many.

17 "Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the
gardens,
Following one in the center,
Who eat swine's flesh, detestable things, and mice,
Shall come to an end altogether," declares the Lord.¹

But until that day, we are instructed not to participate in pagan practices, for such practice mixes evil with the holy. We are not to recognize any G-d other than our G-d.

G-d was very clear that following Him and His ways leads to blessing, but turning aside to follow other gods results in cursing.

¹ These are the hallmarks of some pagan worship practices.

Deut 30:15-18

15 "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; 16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. 17 But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, 18 I declare to you today that you shall surely perish.

The city of Ur, from which Terah and Avram were called, was named for the religion of "light." In ancient languages, *ur* means "light." This religion was predominantly found in Babylon, and the surrounding areas. Babylon fittingly means the "city of confusion." It is today also called "shamanism" and is a worship of satanic practices. The god of Babylon was called Bel.² In other places, he was called Baal. He is also called Baphomet. He is represented as half-man and half-goat. In ancient pagan worship, he is called the "angel of light."

² See the judgment of G-d upon Bel in Jeremiah 51:44

Satanists also have their own holy writings, which glorify Satan, regardless of how he is known (Bel, Baal, or Baphomet), and he is generally worshipped on 8 holy days, called “sabbats.” These satanic holy days are most often practiced in the darkness of night – for evil loves darkness. These are counterfeits of the true holy days of G-d found in Leviticus 23.

These satanic holy days have been kept hidden in societies which have exalted G-d and His ways, and thus they have become known as “occult.”³ The Satanist’s holy days are:

1. Your Birthday: This is the most important holiday in Satanism because Satanism is the celebration of self-indulgence, and glorification of self above all else.

2. Spring Equinox. It is celebrated by recognizing a renewing of the self and the world. Lucifer is associated with this holiday, as Lucifer (portrayed as the morning star, Venus) is seen in the east where the sun rises, and the day begins.

3. Walpurgisnacht, 30th April: This holiday is associated with the creation of the Church of Satan. Founded in the late 60’s by Anton

³ “Occult” literally means “hidden.”

LaVey (the author of the Satanic bible), it signified the first time a Satanic association had been publicly recognized.

4. Summer Solstice: An association for this holiday would likely be North, and Belial,⁴ represented by the Sun.

5. Autumn Equinox: It recognizes the moon, West, and Lilith.⁵

6. Samhain, 31st October: Pronounced as “soween,” this holiday is known as Halloween or all hallow’s eve.

7. Winter Solstice: This reminds satanists of Satan and his planetary counterpart, Saturn, and South to the earth below us.

8. One’s date of initiation into satanism: This is the day that a person is initiated into Satanism, which includes a ritual. For women, it involves being laid upon a wooden altar, strapped down, raped, and then required to eat eyes and drink blood. For young men, it includes being stripped naked, and then being forced to run between other naked worshippers who pour blood upon him. Then he is required to join in group sex.

⁴ The name Belial has a number of variations in interpretation, from Satan himself, down to “without a master,” “wicked” or “worthless.”

⁵ Lilith is the name of Mesopotamian and Babylonian class of demons. In the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q510-511) this name is found in a list of monsters.

About 4500 years ago, in the lands that would eventually become known as England and Ireland, Celtic religion celebrated their religion called Wicca, worshipping their pagan god, Soween, who is also called the “Lord of the dead.” The observatory at Stonehenge seems likely as a central site for those worshippers.

Stonehenge was created in about 3,000 BCE by an ancient people, possibly the Druids, as a solar observatory, able to calculate the various sabbats for pagan worship. It positively calculates the winter solstice, one of the high holy days in Druidic, and pagan Celtic culture. Today, modern Druids still celebrate both the spring and winter solstice at that site.



If one’s birthday is considered by satanists as the day where the individual has the greatest spiritual power, then Soween is considered the night of the second highest spiritual power.

Satanists believe that on Soween, as the veil between the living and the dead grows thinnest, the dead would cross over into the land of the living for one night.

The Celts believed that if one did not offer a sacrifice of food to the spirits, they would have the power to place a curse upon you and your house. And so you could avoid being afflicted by evil spirits by offering them a sacrifice.

In Ireland, which was heavily influenced by the Celtic practices, Soween became a national holiday, during which children are released from school, and there are celebrations with fireworks.

Catholic Popes had for some time tried to make Catholicism more palatable to pagans by adopting pagan holy days into Christianity. Examples include the rebirth of the Sun, called Saturnalia (December 25); the spring festival of the pagan goddess Ishtar (Easter); and the weekly worship day for the pagan goddess Diana (Sunday). These adoptions made it easier for people to call themselves “Christians” while holding fast to their pagan practices.

It seems that Pope Gregory III (731-741) recognized Soween as a useful way to get the Irish to adapt to Christianity by trying to convert their

pagan celebration into a “Christian” one. The Pope did so by consecrating the chapel in St. Peter's basilica to “all the saints.” In 834 Pope Gregory IV established this festival on the Christian calendar as “All Saints Day.”⁶ It was also later called “all hallows eve”, which even later became “Halloween.”

The rationale for the Pope’s actions seem to be a tacit adoption of pagan theology. Since pagans (and now Catholics) believed this was the day when the world of the dead intersected with our world, it seemed to be a good time for the Catholic church to urge its members to pray to the dead saints, asking them to intervene on behalf of the living. This practice mirrored how the pagans petitioned Satan (Bel, Baal, Baphomet) and also the dead on their behalf. Did the adoption by the Catholics, and the shiny new name conferred upon this pagan holy day change its true character? Did that adoption move the church’s people toward greater holiness?

Early in American history, Halloween was not celebrated, due to our nation’s greater national focus upon G-d. However, some small enclaves of Irish immigrants did celebrate this day.

⁶ During the English Reformation, Soween, or “All Saints Day” was finally abolished. But it has incrementally returned, and is once again celebrated as a holiday by more than half of the population of England.

But then thousands of Irish immigrants flooded into America during the great potato famine of 1845, bringing their national customs with them. Soween began to spread across America.

One of the imported Irish customs was a legend of a tragic fellow known as “Irish Jack.” Irish Jack, it seems was a despicable drunk, who seemed to have his wits about himself sufficiently on one occasion to trick the Devil into climbing an apple tree to get an apple. While the evil one was up the tree, Jack carved the sign of the cross into the trunk of the tree, trapping the Devil in the tree. Jack then forced the Devil to swear that he would never come for Jack’s soul. Jack then released the Devil.

Once Jack died, he sought entry to heaven, and as the legend goes, he was turned away at the gate for his sins. He was sent to hell, where the Devil also turned Jack away, keeping his bargain.⁷ Jack had a turnip in his hand at that gate, and Satan threw at him a live coal from the fires of hell. Jack took that live coal and carried it inside the hollowed-out turnip with a window cut in one side. It became his lantern to guide him through eternal night.

And so the legend goes that a now disembodied spirit of Jack roams the world looking for rest. He was soon identified as “Jack of the Lantern”

⁷ This entire legend involves breathtakingly bad theology, and this part is no exception.

or “Jack O’Lantern.” In modern days, larger pumpkins have replaced turnips, and the window in the front of the lantern is carved in the semblance of a frightening face which in past generations was expected to frighten-off evil spirits. But in America today, adherents to Halloween/Soween use a Jack O’Lantern as a sign to attract to their doors other people who likewise celebrate this pagan holy day.

Since pagan, and now Catholic, theology embraced the idea of ghosts of the dead roaming the world on “All Saints Day” or Halloween/Soween, it was believed by the church (and Satanists alike) that those spirits could play devious tricks on the living. So, they thought, it was smart to hide from those spirits by dressing in costumes and covering their faces with masks. That way the spirits wouldn’t recognize them as the intended victim.⁸ This seems consistent with the Celtic practice of wearing animal heads and skins in the belief that they would on this night acquire useful characteristics of that animal.⁹

For many centuries, people have dressed-up like dead spirits or ghosts, and done all sorts of mischief, blaming it all on the roaming trickster spirits of Halloween/Soween. For generations, law enforcement officers have testified that Halloween night is their busiest night for

⁸ It would seem that as these evil spirits pass into this world, they not only lack bodies, but the ability to see clearly enough to identify the intended victims of their mischief.

⁹ Today we see children dressed in Halloween costumes act as if they are the embodiment of the costume they wear.

criminal acts. On this night many black cats disappear, and many cattle are found mutilated in the fields. Vandalism and burglary seem to be common.

In times long past, the people who dressed in garb mimicking the dead would go from house to house demanding gifts of food, including fruits and nuts, and the frightened people would give them what they demanded, to avoid taking a chance upon what might be an actual threat by an actual ghost. It was not uncommon for families to set out a table at their home stocked with treats as an offering to the evil spirits of Soween.

Clearly, the people upon whom this ruse was most effective were people without a deep faith in G-d. We need not fear, for if G-d is with us, then who could be against us?

Now, in later generations, the giving out of candy and other treats has replaced food sacrifices; a cheerful “trick or treat” with an outstretched bag or bucket has replaced demands for food sacrifice; and the costumes of the participants are more reflective of characters found in recent popular films, famous personalities, and even politicians.¹⁰ But fear and death seem to be the persistent central themes of Halloween.

¹⁰ Truly, the appearance of certain politicians at our doors might be more horrifying than would be a spirit.

And parents in America seem excited to involve their children in this shined-up pagan holy day. They say it's "for the children." They dismiss it as "harmless fun." Thus, they deny Satan exists and also deny that G-d is a G-d of justice Who means what He says.

Some churches have begun trying to distance themselves just a little from the satanic worship practices of this day by holding a "trunk or treat" event at their church. But unfortunately, many of the other trappings of pagan worship on this day remain unchanged, even at those churches.

In Ezekiel 41:22 we find that the altar of the L-rd is called the "Table of the L-rd." Paul, in his letter to the congregation at Corinth, made it clear that we must choose whether to eat from the Table of the L-rd, or the table of demons. One may not do both, and remain a believer in G-d.

1 Cor 10:18-22

18 Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar? 19 What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles

sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

This statement is as true today as the day it was first written. If anyone today participates in the pagan worship of Halloween/Soween and solicits others to sit at the “table of demons” by placing out the trappings of that pagan holy day such as depictions of the dead, or a Jack O’Lantern; and if that person passes out candy to people who cry out “trick or treat”; has that person become a prohibited “sharer in demons?”

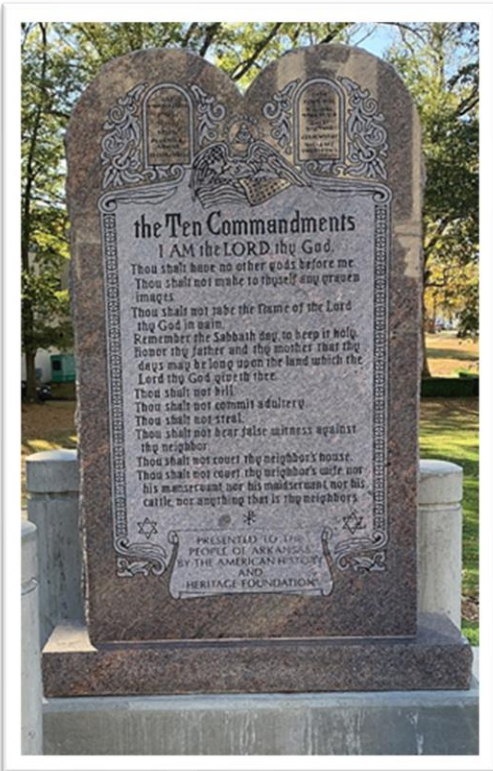
It is clear from Torah. We are not to allow the images of demons to stand alongside the Table of the L-rd.

Deut 16:21-22

21 "You shall not plant for yourself an Asherah¹¹ of any kind of tree beside the altar of the Lord your God, which you shall make for yourself. 22 Neither shall you set up for yourself a sacred pillar which the Lord your God hates.

¹¹ The fertility goddess who was the consort of Baal, also known as the “queen of heaven.” She was represented by a tree, sometimes carved, which was called the “tree of life” by pagans. In pagan worship, men would have sex with a temple prostitute in the presence of an Asherah pole to have fertility in their farmlands.

Should images of pagan worship be found at our homes?



Today, pagans have taken great offense at having anything representing G-d displayed prominently at any public place.

There was a great furor surrounding the installation in 2017 of the Ten Commandments on a monument at the Arkansas state capital in Little Rock. The ACLU challenged this as

unconstitutional.

The Satanists decided to follow suit, and erected a statute of Satan, in the form of Baphomet the goat demon on the same grounds. They argued this would be acceptable because it would “show religious pluralism and freedom”, and not a preference for any particular religion on the part of the state.



The Satanic Temple's bronze statue of the goat demon was only in place very briefly, because of the overwhelming uproar from those people of Arkansas who believe in our G-d. The ACLU has filed suit against the State of Arkansas and the case is now still in Federal District Court awaiting a decision.

In case you might be confused as to whether the Torah has anything to say about sacrifices today to a goat demon, please consider this passage:

Lev 17:6-7

7 And they shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations."

As was the situation with Avram, we are called out of pagan societies, and are to abandon pagan worship. We are to heed the words of G-d given to us through Moses and be holy as G-d is holy. How can we be a nation of priests if we allow any version of Asherah (in the form of a goat demon) to stand in the courts of G-d? Where is our salt and our light if we are not known for separating the holy from the unholy?

I am encouraged by the outrage expressed by the people of Arkansas when Satanists tried to place before their capital the graven image of the goat demon Baphomet.

I am discouraged by the lack of similar outrage from those who proclaim a faith in G-d when every year our society, and yes, even our churches, engage in not merely a recognition of, but a celebration of, the second highest holy day in pagan worship.

I urge those of us who have found ourselves, as Avram did at the beginning of today's parasha, only part-way to the promised land, to now purge our land of the vestiges of satanic worship, and complete the journey.

I now say to you... YES TO *YOU*... who are sitting at Satan's table, get up from your comfortable place, repent, and finish the journey to holiness.