

The Bat Mitzvah of Michelle Villalba

November 8, 2025

17 Cheshvan, 5786

Proverbs 2:6-10

...Adonai gives wisdom. Out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright. He is a shield to those who walk in integrity. He guards the paths of justice, and protects the way of His kedoshim. Then you will discern what is right and just and fair—every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.



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Vayera וַיֵּרָא

READINGS:

Torah: Genesis 18:1-22:24

Haftarah: 2 Kings 4:1-37

Brit Chadashah (New Testament): Luke 1:26-38; 24:36-53; 2 Peter 2:4-11

Children of Faith

The Torah portion today is called "Va-yera," which means "and He [the L-rd] appeared" [to Abraham]. If we comb Genesis, from chapter 12-18, we only find five occasions recorded when the L-rd appears to Abraham—that's during a 25-year period! (It's possible that the L-rd revealed Himself to Abraham more often, but that's all that we know about). What is special about that? We often picture Abraham walking hand-in-hand with the L-rd and enjoying the L-rd's company every day. Maybe, it's much more likely that those special moments with the L-rd were relatively rare, and that the rest of the time, Abraham had to just go on, day after day, by faith.

From the time that the L-rd promised Abraham that he would become a father (Gen. 12:3,7), until he actually did become a father (through Sarah, Gen. 21:2), about 25 years had passed. Paul tells us (Romans 4:19-20) that Abraham did not give up on G-d during those long 25 years. What we forget sometimes is that Abraham's faith took a while to develop and mature. He did not start out as a spiritual giant. For example, in 15:2-3, Abraham assumes that Eliezer, his servant, will inherit his possessions. He knew that the L-rd promised him a child, but he could see nothing happening: "I remain childless." The L-rd appeared to him again, towards the end of the 25-year waiting period and said to him: "...I will give you a son by Sarah," (17:16).

Abraham's response? He laughed and said under his breath, "will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" Abraham had his moments, but if you would evaluate his life as a whole, it was a life lived by faith in the L-rd's Word: "Abraham believed the L-rd and He credited it to him as righteousness." In other words, the L-rd did not bring into the equation those rare times when Abraham was weakened. It is a special blessing to have Abraham's life as a model to follow. When we hear the L-rd clearly speaking to us, we need to respond just like he did—in obedient faith. As we follow the L-rd, there will probably come periods of time when we falter—did we hear G-d's Word? Is the L-rd still around and interested? If we "hang in there" and continue as Abraham did, there will come a time when we receive G-d's blessing as he did. Let's imitate his example.

Order of Service

Opening prayer

Worship

Torah Service – Parashat Vayera וַיֵּרָא

Remarks About Michelle

Slideshow

Special Dance Performance

Prayer for Michelle

Mourner's Kaddish

Prayer for Offering and Children

Prayer for Israel

Announcements

Message

Closing Benediction

