

GENESIS Lesson 19 – 3/17/19

God Visits Abraham

18:1: And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

18:2: And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

18:3: And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

18:4: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

18:5: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

18:6: And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.

18:7: And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

18:8: And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

This is the third time God appears to Abraham (see also Gen. 12:7; 17:1) and He appears to him in the heat of the day, this is when the Sun

is right overhead, this is called the zenith. It is when the day is hottest and this is the time God chose to appear to Abraham.

And when the Lord appeared, Abraham recognized Him, and it is obvious that Lord stood at a distance, for Abraham ran to meet Him.

And when Abraham went before the men he fell down and bowed before them all.

In many Middle Eastern countries, the Mediterranean and even Latin countries, the heat of day provides another rest period, a time for lunch with family and friends often coupled with rest or a nap; in Spanish it is the siesta.

We can also see the Middle Eastern hospitality when Abraham said, "Make ready quickly..." Go to Italy and Greece and visit someone, you will be instantly met with food and drink. My mom always had something in the freezer that she could warm up and serve to guests. When I visited family of friends in Greece, I was met with the customary greeting, "With what will we treat you?"

We always forget some of the qualification of a Bishop.

1 Tim. 3:2: A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Titus 1:8: But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

I believe that if we closely examine the qualifications of bishops and deacons as given in the scriptures that many who are serving in these offices today would be disqualified.

How about this in Titus 1:7: For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry...

Another Middle Eastern custom of that day was on display in this passage when Abraham said, "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet..."

People of the Middle East in the Bible days wore sandals instead of shoes, and as they usually went barefoot in the house, frequent washing of the feet was a necessity because of the dirt and grime that had accumulated on their feet.

Therefore it was the first duty of the host to give his guest water for the washing of his feet, to omit this was a sign of marked unfriendliness.

Luke 7:44: And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

When two angles go to meet Lot (Gen. 19), Lot meets them with the same attitude.

Gen. 19:2: And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

So what did Abraham feed these men? God appeared to Abraham as three men (Gen. 18:2).

"...cakes ...butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed..."

Talk about a vegan diet! So no vegetables? And Abraham lived to be 175 years old (Gen. 25:7) eating bread, butter, milk, and veal.

Sarah Laughs

18:9: And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

18:10: And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.

18:11: Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

18:12: Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

18:13: And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

18:14: Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

18:15: Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

In this passage we have these three men speaking as one (1 John 5:7)! Another clue as to the identity of these men. And then the Lord switches from speaking in the 3rd person plural to the 3rd person singular.

Remember Gen. 1:26: And **God** said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...Three times!

And then God switches and start speaking in the singular in verse 26.

Gen. 1:27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Three times again!

In verse 10 God says, “according to the time of life,” this would be the nine months of gestation given to being forth a child. The promise God gave was not that she will conceive “according to the time of life,” but that she will “have a son” “according to the time of life.”

And the Bible lets us know that “Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women” reminding us that if Sarah was to have a child, God would have to do it—a miracle had to happen.

And as God is telling Abraham this, Sarah is behind the door, the “flap” of the tent and she overhears the conversation. She was basically eavesdropping. One commentator said, “Sarah is inside getting the biscuits ready and overhears...” Her laughter was silent, but she did not expect that God was able to hear her.

And what did Sarah mutter underneath her breath that the Lord heard? “After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”

This is what Peter was referring in 1 Peter 3:6 when he said, “Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord...”

Sarah doubted, but sometime before she gave birth, she believed in God because of what we are told n Hebrews.

Hebrews 11:11: Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

And then the Lord confronts her, “Why did you laugh... Is anything too hard for the LORD?” At this rebuke is perhaps when Sarah believed in God.

We often laugh at something that seems so incredible or impossible because we are only looking at it from the human perspective rather than looking to God.

The Lord will always confront your unbelief. “O ye of little faith?” To Peter He said, “O thou of little faith...”

Imagine the how startled and frightened (vs. 15) Sarah was at the Lord’s rebuke! And the Lord plainly says, “Sarah shall have a son.”

The Christian’s problem is never in doubting God’s ability. We know God can. What we doubt and question is, “Is He going to do it?”

We come to what is called the omnipotence paradox which states: “Could God make a rock so big He couldn’t move it?”

We don’t doubt God’s ability, but we doubt God’s designs for our life.

Rom. 8:28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God...

This is when you and I as a Christin need to surrender to God, and pray first, “Not my will, but thine, be done.” And when we begin praying according to God’s will, we will overcome the problem sophist’s paradox.

The Cry of Sodom

18:16: And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

18:17: And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

18:18: Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

18:19: For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

18:20: And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

In verse 17 the Lord here is either talking to Himself or He is conversing with the other two men. I believe He is talking out loud just like He said in Gen. 1:26: And **God** said, Let us... Who was God talking to?

If you hold to the interpretation that these three men are God and two of His angels, then when God says “I will go down” (vs. 21) and He doesn’t, because only the other two go, then you need to interpret this passage and say that God can have perfect knowledge without “going down.” And this is true, for God is omniscient—knows everything.

There is another passage where God intervenes personally and this in Genesis 11. (See notes in GENESIS Lesson 10).

Gen. 11:7: Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

The sins being committed in Sodom and Gomorrah were serious enough that God was going to “inspect” and see if “...they have done altogether according to the cry of it...” More on Sodom and Gomorrah next week.

Amos 3:7: Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

God revealed what He was going to do to Sodom and Gomrah to Abraham because he was a prophet!

Gen. 20:7: Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.

And God has revealed to us what he will do during these last days in the book of Revelation.

Verse 19 requires some study because it reveals something about Abraham that God saw.

God says, “For I know him...” Here, the foreknowledge of God clearly precedes any predestination. God knew what Abraham would do before Abraham did it. And this is the correct order of how things work. God knows who is going to get saved and who is not. God know which of His children will obey and which ones won't. God knows those of us who will stay true and those of us who will be deceived in the last days. He's God!

When God looked at the sea of humanity in Abraham's days He saw a man who would be willing to sacrifice his son to at God's command. And therefore says in Gen 12:1: "...Abram, Get thee out of thy country..."

God knew that Abraham would "...command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD..." Can God say that about you?

The Three Men

So who were these three men, we know that one must have God because the passage tells us that the Lord appeared to Abraham.

I believe this passage proves the Trinity, we know the Hebrew word for "God" is the plural word "Elohim". Here we see God in His plurality-three in one.

Though the language used in Genesis 18 is vague and subject to many interpretations, there are enough clues to prove that these three men were God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit who appeared to Abraham in human form.

The other interpretation is that these three men were "God and two of His angels."

Explanation why the two men were not merely angels can be found by comparing several verses.

18:21: I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

18:22: And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

God says I will go to Sodom to inspect the situation, I will go and see... And soon as He is finished saying this, two of the men leave. Can you see this?

Gen. 19:1: And there came **two angels** to Sodom at even... Remember when we said that God sometimes appeared as an angel of the Lord?

We may ask, "Did Lot recognize who these men were?" He knew they were from God, but did he see them as God.

Gen. 19:12: And **the men** said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

Gen. 19:13: For **we will destroy this place**, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and **the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.**

Gen. 19:18: And Lot **said unto them**, Oh, not so, **my Lord**:

Ge:19:21: And **he** said unto him, See, **I have accepted thee** concerning this thing also, that **I will not** overthrow this city...(referring to Zoar)

Lot speaks to them in plural and they respond as one!

Gen. 19:22: Haste thee, escape thither; for **I cannot do any thing** till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

Gen. 19:23: The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

Gen. 19:24: Then **the LORD rained upon** Sodom and upon Gomorrah
brimstone and fire **from the LORD** out of heaven;

So the Lord as two angels was before Lot and He rained fire upon the
valley from the Lord in heaven. Do you see this?

Gen. 19:29: And it came to pass, when **God destroyed the cities** of the
plain...

The two men said to Lot I will not overthrow Zoar for your sake and I
cannot do anything until we have safely got you out and then we are
told that God destroyed the cities and the Lord rained fire from the
Lord in heaven, so the Lord was in two places!

Abraham bargains with God

**18:23: And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the
righteous with the wicked?**

So Abraham knew what God was about to do and begins to worry. And
the next 9 verses proceeds to see if he can convince God to not do what
He was about to do.

Abraham begins to intercede with God for the city of Sodom. What is
Abraham's premise? It would not be right or fair or just for God to
destroy the righteous with the wicked.

Abraham appeals to God's righteousness and says in verse 25, "Shall
not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Abraham begins at 50 and stops bargaining when he reaches 10
persons.

We notice how few people it takes to forestall the judgment of God. Archeologist estimate the population of the valley of Siddim to be anywhere from 1 million to 2 million people.

<https://www.aish.com/ci/sam/48931527.html>

God is so patient. If this whole city contained at least 10 righteous people, the hand of judgment would have been withheld. God does not delight in judgment, He delights in mercy. And just a few righteous people can prevent God's judgement from falling on a nation. I believe this why America has been spared, and why the whole world has been spared. But when the rapture happens, all bets are off!

Listen what the two angels tell Lot:

Gen. 19:12: And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

Gen. 19:14: And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters...

Lot, his wife, his two married daughters, his son's-in-law, and his two unmarried daughters (Gen. 19:15), that makes a total of 8 persons! Abraham was worried for his nephew and his nephew's family.

Job 9:22: This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

Many Christians have died in wars, natural disasters and in unfortunate events, and God never intervened.

Lot has eight people as part of his family, now what a coincidence? Noah had eight people in the ark!

One commentary says, "Lot had influence, but no power. He had personal contacts, but no heavenly testimony. He had commercial wealth without spirituality, status without separation, and for security a piece of land that would be burnt to a cinder in 24 hours. Lot is aptly described in 1 Corinthians 3:15."

1 Cor. 3:15: If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.