

Genesis 18 New American Standard Bible

Birth of Isaac Promised

Now the Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. ²When he raised his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed down to the ground, ³and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by.

⁴Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and make yourselves comfortable under the tree; ⁵and I will bring a piece of bread, so that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant.” And they said, “So do as you have said.” ⁶So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead *it*, and make bread cakes.” ⁷Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave *it* to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. ⁸He took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *it* before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.

⁹Then they said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” ¹⁰He said, “I will certainly return to you at this time next year; and behold, your wife Sarah will have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. ¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. ¹²So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have become old, am I to have pleasure, my lord being old also?”

¹³But the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I actually give birth *to a child*, when I am *so* old?’ ¹⁴Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” ¹⁵Sarah denied *it*, however, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

¹⁶Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off. ¹⁷The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸since Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? ¹⁹For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”

²⁰ And the Lord said, “The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. ²¹ I will go down now and see whether they have done entirely as the outcry, which has come to Me *indicates*; and if not, I will know.”

Abraham Appeals for Sodom

²² Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the Lord. ²³ Abraham approached and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous people within the city; will You indeed sweep *it* away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from You to do such a thing, to kill the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are *treated* alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”

²⁶ So the Lord said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the entire place on their account.” ²⁷ And Abraham replied, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am *only* dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the entire city because of five?” And He said, “I will not destroy *it* if I find forty-five there.” ²⁹ And he spoke to Him yet again and said, “Suppose forty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do *it* on account of the forty.” ³⁰ Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do *it* if I find thirty there.”

³¹ And he said, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy *it* on account of the twenty.” ³² Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once: suppose ten are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy *it* on account of the ten.” ³³ As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the Lord departed, and Abraham returned to his place.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God’s character?

Pauls Observations and insights

1. How did the Lord appear to Abraham when he was shading himself from the sun?
2. What does it mean to lift up your eyes?
3. Who were these three men that appeared to Abraham?
4. Why did Abraham run to meet these visitors and when he found them bowed down on his knees?
5. Was he expecting a visit from God and so afraid of missing out on God's blessing?
6. Abraham invites them to rest and recover. Do angels need to rest and recover?
7. His three guests accept his invitation.
8. What made these guests special in Abraham's eyes?
9. The meal Abraham provided, how long did it take for him to cook it?
10. It was Abraham himself, not Sarah or his servants, who served the angels the food.
11. Why did the guests ask Abraham where Sarah was?
12. The angels prophesy the arrival of Abraham's son through Sarah, in just one year's time. How must Abraham have felt?
13. Why was Sarah listening, at the tent, to their conversation?
14. Why did she laugh when she heard them prophesy about the baby?
15. What do you think they did that night when the lights went out?
16. Notice the declaration 'the Lord said to Abraham'.
17. The angels ask 'is there anything too hard for the Lord?'
18. Sarah's unbelief did not stop the blessing becoming a reality.
19. Why did Sarah think she could lie herself out of trouble?
20. Can you deceive the Lord by lying to Him?
21. Do we ever deceive ourselves?
22. Abraham sees his guests off the land and the Lord asks himself a question – 'shall I tell Abraham what I shall do to Sodom and Gomorrah?'
23. Have all the nations of the world been blessed through Abraham?
24. God chose Abraham so that he would teach him to walk in all of His ways.
25. The wrong doing in Sodom was so grave God could not but act in judgement.
26. The Lord has to physically go to Sodom, to confirm for Himself, what He has been told. What does this really mean?
27. The men went down but the Lord stayed with Abraham.
28. Having been told God's plans Abraham intercedes/brokers with God over the destruction of Sodom.
29. He first negotiates with five, increases it to ten and asks God to spare them from judgement.

30. Why does Abraham stop at ten? Is there something significant about this number.
31. Abraham came near to the Lord when the angels went down to Sodom.
32. He appeals to God's mercy in judgement. Would you of had the courage to do the same?
33. Abraham could have been like James and John when they told the Lord to send down fire from heaven, disciples known as 'sons of thunder'.
34. Abraham's persistence with the great God of mercy is evident, but there comes a point when enough is enough.
35. Is ten the magic number for judgement?
36. Having spoken to Abraham the Lord departed and left Abraham who went home.
37. Where has God revealed to you to intercede for others?