

## Genesis 18

**Read Genesis 18:1-8:** This is another significant chapter in the bible. Meeting God is the most exciting thing that can happen to us. Thus far, God has somehow already appeared to Abraham. Now Abraham is seeing Jesus; and having lunch together; along with two angels. The location is at a mighty oak tree. Perhaps that is a comment about Abraham? God steps out of eternity into time, in a physical form to speak with his friend. Any theophany (sighting of God) has to be of Jesus. He is the only visible form of God. We cannot see the Father in these earthly bodies and live (Exodus 33:20). The Holy Spirit is invisible. God is sharing some very weighty information with Abraham about his nephew Lot's community.

*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*” (John 8)

*“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.* (Isaiah 41:8)

Abraham is in a rare class of believers, as he is actually God's friend.

*You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.* (John 15:14)

Seeing a stranger in the wilderness in the middle east is a special occasion. The Bedouin Arabs of today, like Abraham of old, will sit in the entrance way of his tent, in order to be on the watch for **stranger** guests. The inspired apostle gave command concerning hospitality to this type of guest: "Be not forgetful to entertain **strangers**: for thereby some have entertained angels. Perhaps Abraham knew something was up. He did not react with surprise when this visitor asked his wife by name. That is normally an absolute no-no in the middle east.

The faith journey to Canaan taken by Abram was in search of God's city. Maybe it was not just one city. Bethel (house of God) was one of his first stops.

*for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* (Hebrews 11)

We know by 18:22 that God lingered with Abraham, as the angels continued down to Sodom to prepare to destroy it. These same angels arrive in Sodom in 19:1.

We are the beneficiaries of God's friendship with Abraham. That became our pathway to follow. Isaac benefited greatly. Jacob benefitted greatly; and so have we.

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11)*

*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." <sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, <sup>6</sup> just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: (Romans 4)*

We have to make sure that we do not make the same mistakes the Jews made by adding to scripture. They wrote a bible commentary book of rules called the Mishna. Unfortunately, the Mishna became the Jews standard. Huge mistake. There are many examples as to why.

*You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. (Exodus 23:19)*

This verse may have ultimately been intended as a prohibition against pagan practices, or to prevent cruelty in our thoughts. The Mishna expanded on this and declared that you could never have meat and cheese on the same plate...nor could they be eaten together. Ironically, God himself has meat and dairy together during this lunch meeting with Abraham. Obviously, it was not a problem.

Jesus spent a lot of energy fighting the Mishna. He was quoted over and over saying: "You have heard it said..., But I tell you..." These are almost all rebuttals to the Mishna.

**Read Genesis 18: 9-15:** The middle east culture would not include a man asking about another man's wife. This is especially true if she was one of the most beautiful women in the land. Obviously, this visitor knew her name without seeing

her...so Abraham must have known it is God. Sarah did not even have a functioning ovulation anymore. This was a total miracle. God often calls out his miracles in advance.

One interesting note here on when life begins. Is God saying that at *the time of life* begins in the conception or at birth? It seems to be one related and connected thing. It's a continuum, like our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Abraham was 100, and Sarah was 90. God often waits until we give up, to show that it is all in his power. The oldest woman to give birth in recent years was 73 years old through in vitro fertilization. The second oldest was 66.

*And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. <sup>2</sup> For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup> And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac. (Genesis 21)*

**Read Genesis 18:16-32:** This is a beautiful picture of intercession. We are to pray for those in need of mercy. Abraham was testing God to see how small of a group of believers could stave off destruction. Noah had a similar physical salvation. Noah preached to no avail. We know that the actual final number of righteous souls required to avert destruction is just one person.

*Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” (Genesis 19:22)*

*And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! <sup>10</sup> Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.”*

*<sup>11</sup> Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: “LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, ‘He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. <sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’ ” <sup>14</sup> So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people. (Exodus 32)*

Lot chose to live in Sodom; and put his family into harm's way. He moved near the fire to access that tall grass and grazing land. Wealth can provide an illusion of independence and security. It can also make you blind to others less fortunate. Sodom is the classic illustration for the homosexual lifestyle. This is where the term sodomy comes from. Interestingly, homosexuality and confusion is an effect, not the cause of the sin problem. The bigger problem is the refusal to bow to God or apologize for your uncleanness. Gay pride may not mean the same thing that God is telling us. It was the outward, unashamed and a boisterous daring of God to do something about it.

*“As I live,” says the Lord GOD, “neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. <sup>49</sup> Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. <sup>50</sup> And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit. (Ezekiel 16)*

*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6)*

We all sin, but Gay pride is really a provocation, and literally antagonistic to God's order. Especially if there is no willingness to yield to God and societal order. God used natural methods of cleansing and sanitizing. He rained down fire and brimstone; and then covered it with the saltiest water. Salt is the ultimate soap.



Today the ground around the Dead Sea is littered with brimstone Sulphur balls and once fell on this area. There is an archaeological layer of burn soil in an area where there is nothing to burn today.



