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Abraham—Genesis 18

Three “Men” Visit Abraham

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

18:1... MAMRE—“ **Mam're.** (*strength, fatness*). An ancient Amorite, who with his brothers, Eshcol and Aner, was in alliance with Abram, [Gen 14:13](#); [Gen 14:15](#), and under the shade of whose oak grove, the patriarch dwelt in the interval between his residence at Bethel and at Beersheba. [Gen 13:18](#); [Gen 18:1](#). In the subsequent chapters, Mamre is a mere local appellation. [Gen 23:17](#); [Gen 23:19](#); [Gen 25:9](#); [Gen 49:30](#); [Gen 50:13](#)” [*Smith’s Bible Dictionary*].

18:6... THREE MEASURES OF FINE MEAL—“ which was ready sifted from the bran, and was the finest flour that was in the house, and only wanted to be mixed and kneaded and made up into cakes; and he ordered three measures or seahs of them, each of which held more than our peck, and all three made an ephah or bushel, being willing to have enough, and to make a generous entertainment for them” [*John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*].

18:8... BUTTER—“ Curdled milk, curds, butter, and cheese ([Jdg 5:25](#); [2Sa 17:29](#)). But the butter in the East is more fluid and less solid than ours. The milk is put in a whole goatskin bag, sewed up, and hung on a frame so as to swing to and fro” [*Fausset’s Bible Dictionary*].

18:16... SODOM—“ Burning; the walled, a city in the vale of Siddim ([Gen 13:10](#); 14:1-16). The wickedness of its inhabitants brought down upon it fire from heaven, by which it was destroyed ([Gen. 18:16-33](#); 19:1-29; [Deu 23:17](#)). This city and its awful destruction are frequently alluded to in Scripture ([Deu 29:23](#); [Deu 32:32](#); [Isa 1:9](#), [Isa 1:10](#); [Isa 3:9](#); [Isa 13:19](#); [Jer 23:14](#); [Eze 16:46-56](#); [Zep 2:9](#); [Mat 10:15](#); [Rom 9:29](#); [2Pe 2:6](#), etc.). No trace of it or of the other cities of the plain has been discovered, so complete was their destruction” [*Easton’s Bible Dictionary*].

18:17... SHALL I HIDE FROM ABRAHAM—cf., 2 Chr 20:7; Js 2:23.

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **Patriarchy.**

III. Summary.

Abraham had a nice location at the “plains” or oaks of Mamre. Protection from the hot weather could be enjoyed in the shade of the trees. Three visitors come near Abraham’s camp. The wonderfully kind hospitality of Abraham and Sarah can serve as an indicator of their character. We find an announcement made regarding the birth of a son to Abraham and Sarah in the hearing of Sarah and she laughs in unbelief. Sarah is rebuked and denies that she had laughed, but the Lord corrects her lie. One of the most complimentary statements imaginable is made by the Lord with respect to Abraham and his determination to teach his offspring God’s will. The Lord tells Abraham about the coming destruction of Sodom and the reason for it. Because of the presence of his nephew Lot in Sodom, Abraham begins to intercede for the city. Eventually the Lord agrees not to destroy the city if ten righteous souls can be found in Sodom.

IV. Outline.

1. The hospitality of Abraham (Gen 18:1-8; cf., Heb 13:2).
2. Sarah laughs at the announcement that she will bear a child (Gen 18:9-15).
3. Sodom’s future destruction is revealed to Abraham (Gen 18:16-22).
4. Abraham intercedes for the city and the Lord agrees not to destroy it if 10 righteous can be found in it (Gen 18:23-33).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ Abraham’s intercession with the Lord began at fifty righteous souls and ended at ten.
02. _____ Sarah lied about laughing.
03. _____ Nothing is too hard for the Lord.
04. _____ Abraham spoke with great humility as he interceded for Sodom.
05. _____ Someone was afraid in this chapter.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ Which of these words is used to describe what the Lord was doing with Abraham: (a) testing; (b) communing; (c) warning.
07. _____ Where was Sarah when the announcement was made by the visitors that Sarah would bear a son: (a) in the field; (b) by Abraham’s side; (c) in the tent.
08. _____ The Lord said that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was great and: (a) very grievous; (b) longstanding; (c) serious.
09. _____ Which of the following did Abraham NOT do in greeting his visitors: (a) bowed himself toward the ground; (b) fetched water for washing their feet; (c) called himself their servant; (d) introduced them to his wife.
10. _____ Sarah denied that she laughed, but (a) the Lord; (b) Abraham; (c) the angels said “thou didst laugh.”

Fill in the Blanks

11. “And Abraham drew near, and said, ‘Wilt thou also destroy the _____ with the _____?’”
12. In speaking to the Lord, Abraham considered himself to be but _____ and _____.
13. “And Abraham _____ unto the _____, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he _____ to dress it.”
14. _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, & _____ was the progression of the appeal and the response from the Lord regarding the number of righteous souls it would take to spare the cities of the plain.
15. The visitors came to Abraham’s place in the _____ of the _____.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to Genesis 16-17 Questions... [01—False, Gen 17:25; 02—True, Gen 17:4; 03—True, Gen 17:17; 04—True, Gen 16:9; 05—True, Gen 16:4-5; 06—b, Gen 16:1; 07—c, Gen 16:12; 08—a, Gen 17:11; 09—c, Gen 17:20; 10—b, Gen 17:24-25; 11—covenant, Isaac, Gen 17:21; 12—exceeding, fruitful, nations, kings, Gen 17:6; 13—hardly, fled, Gen 16:6; 14—seest, me, Gen 16:13; 15—eight, days, Gen 17:12.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **...when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, ...** (Gen 18:2-8). We see here the marvelous hospitality of Abraham and Sarah. Is hospitality a thing of the past? The inspired writer of the Book of Hebrews must surely have had this text in mind when he wrote the words of Hebrews 13:1-2. Hospitality offers us many opportunities as Christians to wield good influence upon the lost. We can thereby develop a relationship with them and gain their trust with a view toward helping them see their need for salvation in Christ. Too, we can promote unity and togetherness in the church by inviting brethren into our homes. One of the qualities of the early Christians was their hospitality. Paul encouraged the saints at Rome to be “given to hospitality” (Rom 12:13). Bishops in the church are to be lovers of hospitality (Titus 1:8). Matthew opened up his home for a feast which served to introduce his friends to Jesus (Luke 5). James and John were greatly upset with the LACK of hospitality of a certain Samaritan village and asked the Lord if they should call down fire from heaven to destroy it (Luke 9:54). Certainly Christians ought to be hospitable people!
 [Tracy Dugger, “Abraham Entertains Angels; Sodom’s Doom; Sin of Lot’s daughters,” in *The Book of Genesis: Foundational Truth and the Unfolding of God’s Plan of Redemption*, edited by Curtis Cates, pp. 220-222].
2. **...Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the Lord?...** (Gen 18:13-14). Evidently the laughter of Sarah was a different laughter than that of Abraham earlier (17:17), in that Abraham received no rebuke, but Sarah did. Abraham’s laughter must have been the laughter of joy and pleasure at God’s announcement, whereas Sarah’s was a laughter of DOUBT. It is a tremendous mistake for anyone to doubt the omnipotence of Almighty God! Observing this distinction helps us to see the value of reading a little further to find more information as we study the Bible. It is a bit difficult in reading just chapter 17 to determine what kind of laughter Abraham laughed. It is no problem when we continue reading into chapter 18 and read of Sarah’s laughter, which was rebuked by the Lord. Many times in our Bible study we will find that questions can be answered merely by reading just a little further in the text.
3. **Is any thing too hard for the Lord?...** (Gen 18:14). “Here is a question asked which is enough to answer all the cavils of flesh and blood: *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* (Heb. *too wonderful*), that is, (1.) Is any thing so secret as to escape his cognizance? No, not Sarah's laughing, though it was only *within herself*. Or, (2.) Is any thing so difficult as to exceed his power? No, not the giving of a child to Sarah in her old age” [Matthew Henry’s *Commentary on the Whole Bible*].
4. **And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do** (Gen 18:17). Obviously the answer is: NO! God’s revelation to Abraham here was designed to serve as warning of the ultimate fate of all rebellion against God. There was a need for clarity in the mind of Abraham and those who would follow regarding the relationship between vile and presumptuous wickedness, as practiced in the cities of the plain, and the judgment that was about to come upon them. Other warnings were continually given to God’s people about this relationship: (1) Assyria’s conquering of Israel; (2) Babylonia’s conquering of Judah; (3) The destruction of Jerusalem as prophesied by our Lord (Mt 24); (4) The final Day of Judgment (Jn 12:48). [Idea from Coffman].
5. **For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord...** (Gen 18:19). What a wonderful statement to be made by the Lord about Abraham’s ability as a father!!! There is such a great

need for faithful and God-honoring fathers in our world today. May we come to realize the serious role we play whenever we become fathers. Consider these facts about our time...

Fatherhood is Complicated by the IMMORAL Climate of our Day and Time	
Top Seven Problems in the 1940s	Top Seven Problems in 1990s
01. Talking in Class	01. Drug Abuse
02. Chewing Gum	02. Alcohol Abuse
03. Making Noise	03. Pregnancy
04. Running in the Halls	04. Suicide
05. Cutting in Line	05. Rape
06. Dress Code Violations	06. Robbery
07. Littering	07. Assault

Source: B.J. Clarke, in *Encouraging Statements of the Bible*, edited by Michael Hatcher, p. 22.

B.J. Clarke says this: “There is a sense in which our children are the only possessions we can take to heaven. Therefore, we must be as diligent as Abraham in making sure that we command them to know the way of the Lord.” Fathers certainly need to arise to the task and carry out their responsibilities in the home.

6. **For I know him...** (Gen 18:19). God knew Abraham. God possesses perfect knowledge of all human experience. There are some practical implications involved in the truth of God’s omniscience—
1. God is fully aware of our thoughts and attitudes (cf., Gen 6:5; Ps 139:2-3; Acts 1:24; Isa 66:18; Lk 5:22; 6:8; 9:47; Mt 9:4). God is aware of every malicious and hateful thought we have. Every ungodly imagination is open to Him.
 2. God knows what we say (cf., Jer 7:4, 8; 27:16; Mt 12:35-37; 1 Tm 4:12; Titus 2:8; Col 4:6; 1 Pt 3:15; Eph 4:15, 32-32, 29). God hears and knows. We must avoid filthy, profane, and vulgar speech!
 3. God is fully aware of our actions—whether they are good or evil (cf., Prov 15:3 Gen 3:9). He sees and knows of every evil deed that we commit. BUT, He also sees the good that we do.
 4. He sees and knows our sufferings and sorrows (cf., Ps 103:13-14). He knew of the widow’s great poverty (Lk 21:1-4; and of the suffering of the faithful (Heb 11:32-40). If we are suffering with life here on this earth, we must put our trust in God and remember Matthew 6:33 and 1 Timothy 6:6-8.
[Daniel Denham, “The Omniscience of God,” in *The Godhead: A Study of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit*, edited by B.J. Clarke, pp. 149-58].
7. **...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?** (Gen 18:25). The answer is: YES.
- 1) God will do right in holding all accountable people amenable to His law.
 - 1- Sodom and Gomorrah broke the moral law to which God expected compliance (Gen 18:20-21).
 - 2- All men living today are under the Law of Christ and are amenable to it (Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16; Rom 3:23; Jn 8:24; Lk 13:3; Acts 22:16).
 - 3- Ignorance will not alleviate one’s responsibility to obey (Acts 17:30).
 - 2) God shall do right by providentially caring for his faithful children.
 - 1- Lot’s righteousness in a wicked environment prompted God to spare him (2 Pet 2:6-9; Gen 19:4-8, 15-16).
 - 2- We are to live in the world among wicked men, but are not to participate in their sins (Jn 17:15-16; 1 Cor 5:9-10).

- 3) God shall do right in demanding strict adherence to His law.
 - 1- Lot's family was told to escape and not to look back, but his wife did not take God at His word (Gen 19:17, 23-26).
 - 2- Many have forgotten Lot's wife and have deviated from God's law.
- 4) God shall do right in executing wrath on every impenitent sinner (Gen 19:4-7, 9-11; Jude 7; Rom 2:5-6).
 - 1- Many are under the opinion that God will not punish any of his creatures with hell fire, yet he turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes (2 Pet 2:6).
 - 2- Many sins that God rendered judgment upon, man now describes as "an alternate lifestyle."

[Melvin Sapp, "Shall Not the Judge of All the Earth Do right?" in *Old Testament Questions with New Testament Applications*, edited by Garland Robinson, pp. 22-23].

8. **And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes** (Gen 18:27). The significance of God's holiness is seen by our corresponding recognition of sinfulness. Consider others who made similar statements—

1. Isaiah (Isa 6:5).
2. Peter (Lk 5:8).

A proper view of God's holiness can help us to overcome our own self-righteousness and see our need of dependence upon His grace and mercy.

[Mike McDaniel, "The Holiness of God," in *The Godhead: A Study of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit*, edited by B.J. Clarke, pp. 209-10].

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

R F V B G T Y A H N M M J U G I K L O P
 U S Y T R E W Q B A Z I X S R W E D C V
 B O G T Y H N J U R I M G T E R C R Y F
 V D D E W S X H A Q A Z X H A C V F R T
 Y O S H N B G I V F R H W S T V F R T G
 N M T H E D C D W S X Q A A Z Y X S H W
 E D C V A Y T E R E W Q A M Z N X A S S
 D E R F C L V F R T G B N H A Y R U J I
 B G T R F V L V F R E D C T X R S W Q N
 A Z X S W E D B C D E R I F O V B G T Y
 G R I E V O U S E Y T O B M V F E W Q A
 Z X C S W E D V F B N R O T G B N H Y U
 J C O M M A N D J M L G V F R E D C Q M
 A Z H X S W E D C E V E F R T G B N I Y
 Q A Z I X S W E D C C V S V F R T H B G
 B G T Y L R F V C I D E W S X C N X S W
 E D C V F D R F V T B G T Y E I N H Y U
 V F R E D C R W S S X Z A Q E D D C V T
 R F V B G T Y E J U D G M E N T N H Y U
 C D E R F V B T N J B G T Y H N U D R L

[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

Genesis 18:17-21... ¹⁷And the LORD said, Shall I **hide** from **Abraham** that thing which I do; ¹⁸Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a **great** and **mighty nation**, and all the nations of the earth **shall be blessed in him**? ¹⁹For 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. ²⁰And the LORD said, Because the **cry** of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** is great, and because their **sin** is very **grievous**; ²¹I 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.