



Genesis – 18:1-18:33  
Abraham – A Servant of Yahweh  
(Lesson #27)

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*"1 ¶ And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. 2 He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth 3 and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, 5 while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on — since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." 6 And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. 8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.*

Vs – 1 - Once again, Yahweh “appears” to Abraham (Gen 12:7, 15:17, now here). In a way, unlike any other human, God blessed Abram.

I previously told you that the Hebrew word means to **see**, to **perceive**, to **look upon** or to **observe**.

We do not know for sure in what form Yahweh appeared, only that He did.

Here we have a local address, by the “**Oaks of Mamre.**” Now we have seen the “Oaks of Mamre” before.

*“So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.” (Ge 13:18 ESV)*

*“Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram.” (Ge 14:13 ESV)*

*“22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' 24 I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share.”” (Ge 14:22-24 ESV)*

It was there at the Oaks of Mamre, likely owned by his Abraham’s colleague Mamre, when as Abraham, sat in the **door of his tent** (remember he is a nomad), Yahweh appeared to Abraham.

So he has been in the Promised Land for 24 years and he has continued to dwell in a tent.

But he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day, this would have been, as we have already discussed near Hebron.

This is where Abraham has been living for a number of years.

**Vs 2-3 -** While setting in the door of his tent, **he looked up** and **BEHOLD, three men...**

The **suddenness**, the **abruptness is surprising**. Did he **fall asleep**, a **little catnap** in the front door of the tent, or did these **three**, just **bang... APPEAR**.

We cannot be sure, but it has the feel of **suddenness** and **surprise!** He saw them, **he likely jumped up**, and **he ran** from the tent door to meet them.

Now the Hebrew word that is translated in English as run, in the Hebrew means to **run**.

This **wealthy middle eastern man**, when he sees these three, jumps up from where he is seated and (completely out of character) runs to them.

I suspect that Abraham, **recognizes something** about **these men** or at least **something about one of them!**

He **bowed himself** to the earth. Again, Abraham recognizes these visitors are worthy of his **respect! In particular the ONE!**

**Now I recognize that it was likely customary in Abraham's time to bow oneself.** (See Gen 23:7, same Hebrew word.)

As we watch this story develop **our best understanding** is that Abraham is before **Yahweh (Christophany)** (Jesus before the manger) and **two angels**. You will see this develop, and the two angel piece of this will become a little clearer in **Genesis 19**.

**Vs 3 – Then he said “O Lord” אדוני ('Adonay).** If I have found **favor in your sight, do not pass by**.

**APPLICATION:** So they do not pass by, they stay, indicating that Abraham has found favor in the sight of God. **But how do you and I find favor in God's sight today?**

*“1 ¶ What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,” (Ro 4:1-5 ESV)*

**Vs 4-5 -** Let me have some **water brought** and **wash your feet**, likely by a servant. Further, take a **break, rest here under the trees!**

Now there is some **irony here...** Abraham offers God and two angels **REST!**

**THE GREAT OFFER** is that **God offers mankind rest:**

*“28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Mt 11:28-30 ESV)*

Further... While you are **chillaxing**, I will bring some **bread** you can **refresh yourself** and then pass on. Since you have come to me, **please indulge me in this**.

They respond: **Do what you say**. They accept **Abraham's offer of hospitality**. So, he says he is going to fetch a little water, and a snack.

What he actually does is something much different! As you will see he goes and prepares an entire meal for his visitors!

**Vs 6 -** Abraham, **went quickly...** Again, I can picture this **99-year-old man**, moving **quickly back** into the tent. Heading over to his **89-year-old wife** Sarah. Abraham runs to his wife as his very first stop.

**APPLICATION:** Marriage, when done right by both parties, is the closest you and I will get to heaven here on earth!

He looks at Sarah and says, quick make some of those biscuits that you make! **Sarah complies.**

**Vs 7** - Then, this this 99-year-old man **continues to run.** This time he runs out to where the livestock are being kept. Once again, in the Hebrew it means to RUN.

He grabbed a young calf out of the flock, one that was **tender and choice** and gave it to one of his young men (one of his slaves) and said **prepare it quickly!**

**APPLICATION: Abraham gave the very best to Yahweh.** How about you and I?

I hope you see the **urgency** flowing from this text is actually **flowing from Abraham!**

**Vs 8** - Then he took “**curds**”, and the calf that the young man had prepared for him, along with Sarah’s biscuits. He brought it to the three men.

**He stood there by them as they ate.** Abraham, stands as a **servant** while these **three men eat the meal** that he has quickly overseen the preparation of.

Abraham might have been the wealthiest man in the region. He was definitely a man whom God had spoken to on multiple times. Yet, first and foremost Abraham was a servant.

*“3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” (Php 2:3-7 ESV)*

**APPLICATION:** As you consider Abraham’s hospitality, I would remind us:

*“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” (Heb 13:2 ESV)*

But it goes **beyond that doesn’t it? Peter writing to believers:**

*“8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (1Pe 4:8-9 ESV)*

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**9** They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." **10** The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. **11** Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. **12** So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" **13** The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' **14** Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." **15** But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."

**Vs 9** - Notice **they said to him...**

We are not sure if “they” is all three, or just the two angels. They ask: Where is Sarah your wife and Abraham responds that she is in the tent.

Now of course, the angel of the Lord knows where Sarah is, this question is asked, because **the focus is about to shift to Sarah.**

**Vs 10 - Then Yahweh (LORD) said: "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son."**

**This is exactly what Yahweh told Abraham in last week's lesson.** We would have imagined that he had **shared** that with her. Again, it could have been **days, weeks, no more than a couple of months** since that event.

We would guess that Abraham would have told Sarah what Yahweh told him, namely:

*"15 ¶ And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." (Ge 17:15-16 ESV)*

This is the **scarlet thread**, this is the **promised seed**, of who the **Messiah would come**. We do not see that clearly here, but we will.

Here, interestingly enough Yahweh asks where Sarah is, and then repeats what he had previously told Abraham.

**Vs 10b** – Then we read: *And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.* Sarah, may have heard about this from Abraham, but now she is hearing it directly from the Angel of the Lord.

**Vs 11** - Here we have **commentary**, likely **added by Moses**, to ensure that his readers fully understand the scenario.

They were both old. The Hebrew word is זָקֵן (**zaqen**) it means **old** or **elderly**. To be sure we understand... They were both **advanced in their years**.

Further... **The way of women had ceased with Sarah.** I would **argue** the way of women have **never started**, but we get the point.

Is the writer telling us that she **no longer experienced menstrual cycles**? Is the writer telling us that she has entered **what we call menopause**? We cannot be sure, but we are told plainly that the **“way of women” had ceased with Sarah.**

The writer wants to make sure that we understand, **getting pregnant is no longer possible!**

Do you sense the weight? Do you sense the **impossibility of this promise**? God has, as I have told you many times, here once again God has stacked the deck against Himself and fulfilling this promise.

**APPLICATION:** God does this in our life, so that we will run to HIM to resolve our impossible situation. He brings impossible scenarios into our lives, so that only He can fix it. We must trust HIM!

**Vs 12 - Sarah laughed within herself...** Then Sarah said to herself: *"After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"*

**Sarah has a private party of unbelief.** No one would know that Sarah does not believe the promise.

**This is a heart issue.** Notice she also referred to **Abraham** as “old.” זקן (**zaqen**).

Then she referred to herself as “**worn out.**” The Hebrew word is בלה (**balah**), it comes with the idea of **wearing out** or **wasting away**, it is like something that is simply used up.

She says **he** is an **old man**, and **I am wasted away**, now shall I have the pleasure of childbirth?

**She does not see it happening!** I suspect she believes in God, she believes in Yahweh, but this is a **bridge too far**.

**APPLICATION:** Sarah’s unbelief may have been hidden from men, her response may have been internal only. But neither she, nor her internal response were hidden from God.

**Good lesson for us! God sees our heart too!**

*“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Pr 4:23 ESV)*

One more point, notice that Sarah called Abraham Lord. As a Sunday School teacher, I do not want to harp on this point, but I do owe it to each of us to point it out.

She showed **respect, honor, and submission** for and to her husband.

**Men,** I will remind us, that you and I are to **love our wives as Christ loved the church!**

**Vs 13-14** - Yahweh (Christophany) looks at Abraham and asks the **following questions:**

- 1) Why did she laugh and say: *‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’*
- 2) **Is anything too hard for Yahweh?**

It does not appear Yahweh gives Abraham or for that matter Sarah **time to answer**. But it wasn’t really a question, was it? **I suspect that it was a rebuke!**

**\*\*\* How did this angel know Sarah laughed, when she laughed within herself? \*\*\***

Then the second question: *Is anything too hard for Yahweh?*

The Hebrew word here is: פלא (**pala’**). The word is normally translated **marvelous, wonderful, wonderful** or **extraordinary**. The question, that Yahweh asks is: **Is there anything to marvelous for Yahweh to perform?**

The BBE captures this idea: *“Is there any wonder which the Lord is not able to do? At the time I said, in the spring, I will come back to you, and Sarah will have a child.” (Ge 18:14 BBE)*

Yahweh follows up his **probing questions** with a **predictive prophecy!**

**Vs 14b** - At the appointed time, **Yahweh would return to them**. I do not think he means the Angel of the Lord will show up in one year, but rather, the promise of the coming son will happen this time next year!

Here is what Yahweh says: Laugh it up, worry about your old age. But I am going to do what I said I was going to do and I will do it in about one year!

**Vs 15** - We can imagine Sarah, **embarrassed** and **afraid**, she never **meant to imply God was not telling the truth** or **God could not fulfill his promises**. It just sort of slipped through her mind and she laughed inside.

But Now what? **Sarah denied it** saying... *“I did not laugh,”* then we are told plainly. **She was afraid.**

**Fear can lead to bad decisions.** It did here for Sarah:

**APPLICATION:** Over and over the Bible tells us to not fear. Here is Jesus: *"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* (Lu 12:32 ESV)

**Vs 15b** – God could have let her off the hook, but then she opened her mouth this second time. God responded: *"No, but you did laugh."*

**APPLICATION:** A little too quick to speak with our inside voice, that is followed by a lot too quick to speak with our outside voice.

It reminds me of the disciple with the foot shaped mouth. Yes, Peter, but it can be you and I too!

That is why the Bible says things like:

*"Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;"*  
(Jas 1:19 ESV)

*"Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent."*  
(Pr 17:28 ESV)

When Abram laughed it went one direction, when Sarah laughed, it went a totally different direction.

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**16 ¶ Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. 17 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I have chosen him, 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 to Abraham what he has promised him." 20 Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."**

**Vs 16** - So the men set out to leave Abraham's tent there in the Oaks of Mamre. They looked down towards Sodom, this would have been down in elevation.

Abraham, walked with them to see them on their way. This was at a minimum being hospitable.

**Vs 17-18** - Here again, clearly this Angle of the Lord is the LORD (Yahweh) Himself. **For the LORD said...**

This is a very interesting conversation, for Yahweh asks a question, although it is unclear that he is asking it of anyone. It rather appears a question that is asked for the benefit of Abraham.

Clearly, Abraham had no idea what God is about to do.

Before the question can be answered by anyone, the **LORD keeps talking.**

**Four Amazing realities are disclosed:**

- 1) **Seeing Abraham's position as the father of the nations**, God opts not to hide what he is doing, but rather disclose what he is doing.

**Vs 19** - 2) I have chosen him, he is mine. Better translation: **I "know" him or I perceive him, he is mine.**

- 3) I chose (know) him, that **he might walk with me!**

4) **I've done all this to fulfill what I have promised him.**

This is an amazing disclosure... God fully intends to fulfill his promises in Abraham.

**Vs 20** - So Yahweh shares with Abraham, that the outcry “against” Sodom and Gomorrah is GREAT and their sin is very grave. The picture is one of victims crying out against the perpetrator, in this case Sodom and Gomorrah.

**Vs 21 - Yahweh says:** I will go down and see if what I am hearing is true.

God does not need to go anywhere and God sees from every vantage point, but this is anthropomorphic language, that in this case is meant to get the attention of one man. Abraham...

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*22 So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. 23 ¶ Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" 26 And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." 27 Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. 28 Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." 29 Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." 30 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." 31 He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." 32 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." 33 And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place."*

**Vs 22** - The conversation ended as quickly as it started and the men turn to go to Sodom. But, Abraham stood there before Yahweh. What seems like was **Yahweh, two angels, and Abraham**, is now just **Yahweh and Abraham**.

The angels appear to continue their journey to Sodom on their own. Abraham will show an keen interest in Sodom. This is likely because his nephew Lot is there. **For sure**, we see him **interceding for Sodom** and in this sense, he is **serving as a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ!**

**Vs 23-24** - The text tells us that Abraham **draws near to God** and asks a series of **six questions** to God.

If there are fifty righteous people, will you sweep them away with the unrighteous? **Stated differently, will you spare the city if there are 50 righteous within its walls?**

**Vs 25** - Abraham questions takes on a different sort of flavor, almost as if Abraham is tutoring God. Of course he is not, but he is showing us his views of God. His questions, give way to his **two-part conclusion**:

- **First** – Abraham says: **far be it from you** to put to death the wicked with the righteous. Far be it from you to set up a condition where the unrighteous fare as the just.
- **Second** – A rhetorical question of which Abraham understands the answer: **“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”**

**The Creator and Judge will always do what is just.** What a reassuring reminder. It seems in his heart, Abraham believed that God would not sweep away 50 people because of Sodom's sin.

**Vs 26 - God responds –Due to my nature,** due to who I am. **If I find 50 righteous people** in the city, I will **spare the whole place,** I will **spare the entire city** for the sake of those 50!

**This one point, no further developed explains a great deal about our God.** He is patient. He is longsuffering. He is merciful. He is kind.

If this is a picture of final judgment, and I believe it is, we are about to learn a great deal about God's compassion on people!

**Vs 27-28 -** Abraham follows with his **second interaction** with Yahweh. First he acknowledges who he is before the **Creator of all things.** I have undertaken to speak with my creator, even though I am but dust and ashes. Then he asks his follow-on, second question.

**Vs 28b –** Yahweh provides a **quick response** to Abraham's second question: *"I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there."*

**Vs 29 -** Again, Abraham speaks to God, this is the **third time he questions God:** He drops the number to **40.**

**Vs 29b –** Yahweh quickly responds: *"For the sake of forty I will not do it."*

**Vs 30 -** Here we find the **fourth time Abraham questions God. He leads with:** *"Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak.* Then in verse 30a he asks (fourth time), suppose 30 are found there, in the city?

**Vs 30b -** Yahweh quickly responds: *"I will not do it, if I find thirty there."*

**Vs 31 -** Here we see Abraham's **fifth interaction** with God, his fifth question, suppose 20?

**Vs 31b –** Yahweh responds: *"For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it."*

**Vs 32 -** Here we find **Abraham's sixth question:** He takes a **bold step,** he has been **whittling the number down,** now he **knocks it in half** and **asks his question.** Suppose there are ten righteous people in Sodom?

Abraham's view of God's holiness and mercy is that God would spare a whole city for ten, or stated differently and the way we should understand it, God would not sweep away anything if 10 or more righteous people existed in the city. **Is that a pretty high view of God?**

**Vs 32b –** Yahweh, once again quickly responds: *"For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."*

Abraham, as he stated, **draws silent. Likely suspecting** there are **Lot and his wife (two),** there are **Lot's two daughters (four)** and there are **Lot's two daughters fiancés (six).** We only need four more in the entire city to stop God's judgment.

**Vs 33 -** Yahweh, "went on his way" and Abraham returned to his tent.

As I ponder this event, I am once again struck by how amazingly God has fulfilled his promises.

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