

Genesis 18

Verses 1-5

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. ² When 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, ³ and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by. ⁴ Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and make yourselves comfortable under the tree; ⁵ and 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.”

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.

Abraham moved to this area in chapter 13 so he has been there for at least 20 years.

See pic 1805

Genesis time line

Ch.	Person	Event	Age	Year
11	Terah	Terah dies	205	1921
12	Abram	Leaves Haran	75	1921
12	Abram	She is my sister (1st time)	75	1921
13	Abram	Abram & Lot separate		
14	Abram	Abram rescues Lot		
14	Abram	Melchizedek		
15	Abram	God promises him a son		
16	Abram	Ismael born	86	1910
17	Abraham	Circumcision	99	1897
18-19	Lot	Sodom and Gomorrah	99	1897
20	Abraham	She is my sister (2nd time)	99	1897
21	Abraham	Isaac born	100	1896
22	Abraham	Abraham Tested	120	1876

² When 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, ³ and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by.

At 99 years of age most of us would be glad if we could walk much less run to meet some unexpected quests. ☺ However, given the fact that he lived to be 175, he was more like a 50 year old in our time.

⁴ Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and make yourselves comfortable under the tree; ⁵ and 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.”

There is no indication that Abraham recognized who his guests were, he was simply displaying courtesy and honor to strangers.

He minimizes the kindness that he is about to show them when he mentions the water and bread because in actuality he treats them with a feast.

Verses 6-8

⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead *it*, and make bread cakes.” ⁷ Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave *it* to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. ⁸ He 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.

This is quite a feast for some strangers. Also, Abraham’s actions (hurried, quickly, ran, and hurried) seem to demonstrate that these were special guests but at this point there is no indication that Abraham knew who they were.

Verses 9-10

⁹ Then they said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” ¹⁰ He 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.

Up to this point, the identity of Abraham's guests was unknown but now both Sarah and Abraham had to know the nature of their guests.

It seems Abraham was not eating with his guests and Sarah isn't even in their presence but she was eavesdropping hoping to overhear what the visitors had to say.

Verses 11-15

¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, am I to have pleasure, my lord being old also?" ¹³ But the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I actually give birth *to a child*, when I am so old?' ¹⁴ Is 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." ¹⁵ Sarah denied *it*, however, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh."

¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. ¹² **So Sarah laughed to herself**, saying, "After I have become old, am I to have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

Her laugh demonstrated a lack of faith because the Lord had told them two times already that they would have a son together.

1. See Genesis 15:2-4

² But Abram said, "Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ Abram also said, "Since You have given me no son, one who has been born in my house is my heir." ⁴ Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."

2. See Genesis 17:15-17

¹⁵ Then God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her *by* the name Sarai, but Sarah *shall be* her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother of* nations; kings of peoples will come from her." ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man a hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, give birth *to a child*?"

¹³ But the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I actually give birth *to a child*, when I am so old?’ ¹⁴ Is 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.”

The Lord may have addressed Abraham about his wife’s laugh to remind him that he had done the same thing. See Genesis 17:17 that is quoted above.

The question, “Is anything too difficult for the Lord”, needs no reply. The one, who created all things, controls all things and He can change them at will.

¹⁵ Sarah denied *it*, however, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

None of us want to be caught in a moment of weakness but God confronted her so that she might grow in her faith. We know this helped her to grow in her faith because the writer of Hebrews tells us this was the case.

See Hebrews 11:11

¹¹ By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond *the proper time of life*, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.

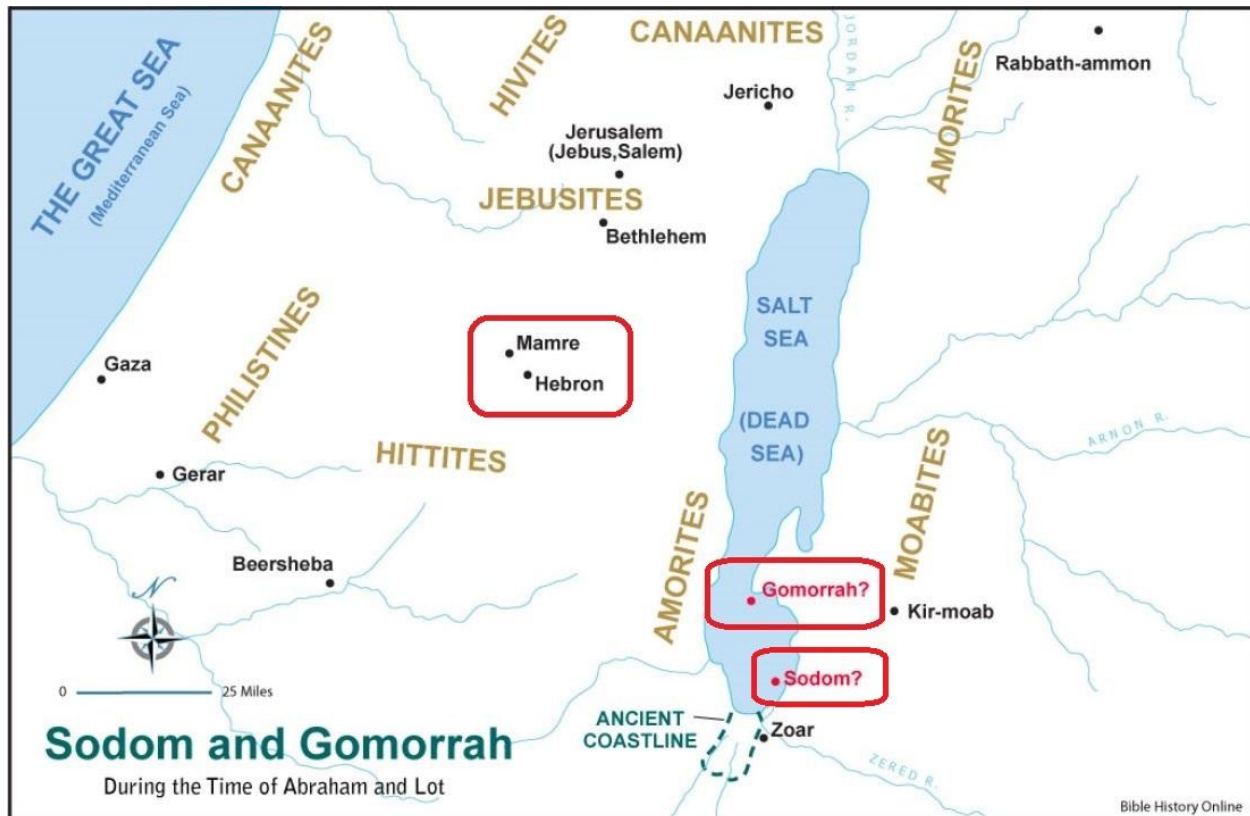
Verses 16 -19

¹⁶ Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off. ¹⁷ The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ since Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? ¹⁹ For 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.”

¹⁶ Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off.

The three “men” and Abraham left Mamre (Hebron) and headed toward Sodom & Gomorrah.

See map 1805



The elevation of Hebron is 2,800 feet above sea level. There is some debate about the actual location of Sodom and Gomorrah but we know these cities were near the Dead Sea which is 1000 to 1300 feet below sea level. Because of the steep decline the 4 of them could see the towns they were headed for.

19 For 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.

There are two important lessons we should take away from this.

1. The blessings that God had promised to Abraham were conditional. If Abraham commanded his children to keep the way of the Lord then God would bring these blessings (the promises He made to Abraham) upon him.
2. God choose to reveal the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah to Abraham because this was a practical lesson that Abraham could pass on to his kids.

Verses 20-21

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.”

This account seems rather quaint because we know that God knows all things, and He didn't need to personally investigate what was going on in Sodom and Gomorrah. However, this approach was a good way to convey the fact that God is concerned about justice and being fair to those who have been accused of wrong doing.

Verses 22 -25

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?”

²² Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the Lord.

Initially the four men started toward Sodom (see verse 16) but then The Lord and Abraham stopped and talked while the two angels continued on.

²³ Abraham approached and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”

Was Abraham questioning God's righteousness?

He could have asked God if there were any righteous men in the city, and if so, what would happen to them.

But God doesn't rebuke him for asking the question.

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?

This sounds a lot like Abrahams first question and he had not given the Lord a chance to answer that question. Again, God does not rebuke him for it.

Verses 26-33

So the Lord said, “If I find in Sodom **fifty** righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account.” ²⁷ And Abraham replied, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am *but* dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five?” And He said, “I will not destroy *it* if I find **forty-five** there.” ²⁹ 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.

²⁷ And Abraham replied, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am *but* dust and ashes.”

We can see from this that Abraham knew his place, and was not questioning God’s fairness. His question came from his concern for the safety of Lot and any other innocent people in the town. After all, he had rescued these people not long ago.

See Genesis 14:14 -16

¹⁴ When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, *numbering* 318, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ Then he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. ¹⁶ He brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the *other* people.

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.”

The Lord started out saying He would spare the town if 50 righteous people were found. Abraham followed up by reducing the number of the righteous until he reached the final negotiated number of 10 righteous people.

Unfortunately, Sodom did not have 10 righteous people in it.