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## Genesis 18

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Genesis 18.

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### Topics.

- The LORD appears to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre at the door of his tent.
- Three men appear to Abraham and he bows down saying, "O Lord."
- The LORD tells Abraham about this time next year, Sarah will have a son.
- The men leave to go to Sodom and Abraham sent them on their way.
- The outcry against Sodom is great so the LORD goes to see for Himself.
- The men go to Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.
- The LORD finishes speaking to Abraham and went his way.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

**The previous chapter:** the focus of chapter seventeen was upon God's promise to Abraham that he would be the father of a multitude of nations; God changing Abrams name to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah and telling them kings will come from them; God telling Abraham Sarah will bear him a son and his name will be Isaac; God giving Abraham the covenant of circumcision and God telling Hagar her son Ishmael will be a great nation and father of twelve princes. It ends with Abraham and Ishmael and all the males of Abraham's household being circumcised.

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### GENESIS 18:1

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#### **The LORD appears to Abraham by the Oaks of Mamre at His Tent.**

- **Genesis 18:1:** 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.

Here it is the LORD who appears to Abraham.

**The LORD:** the name LORD in this verse comes from the following Hebrew words

- Y<sup>e</sup>hovah: meaning the self-Existent or Eternal One it embraces Jehovah which is the Jewish national name of God.
- Yahh: which means the same as the sacred name Jah, meaning the Lord most vehement.
- Y<sup>e</sup>hovih: (a variation of Y<sup>e</sup>hovah) used after the Hebrew word ('Adonay) and pronounced by Jews as ('elohiym), in order to prevent the repetition of the same sound, since they in other places pronounce the word (Y<sup>e</sup>hovah) as ('Adonay) meaning God.

Summing these all up the title, "The LORD" embraces all the supremacy, power, attributes and sovereignty that the invisible, immortal, Almighty Holy God the creator of all things and source of all life has.

**The oaks of Mamre, at Hebron:** (Gen. 13:18) are named after Mamre the Amo-rite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner who were allies of Abram. It was with the consent of these Amorites, and by virtue of the treaty entered into with them (Gen. 14:13), that Abram made this group of oaks one of his resting places, but not for any religious or superstitious reason

as the heathens used such a place for, but because they formed a shady and pleasant spot to dwell and rest under. The oaks, (also translated the plains of Mamre) are in Hebron which is a town and a place about twenty miles south of Jerusalem on the way to Beersheba.

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## GENESIS 18:2-9

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### Three Men Appear to Abraham, and Bowing He says, "O Lord."

- **Genesis 18:2-9:** 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 <sup>3</sup>and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup>Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, <sup>5</sup>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." <sup>6</sup>And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." <sup>7</sup>And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent."

**Men and Lord:** here Abraham refers to the three men as Lord, the word men in these verses, comes from the Hebrew word (*'enowsh*) it refers to a mortal a man or mortal men in general. The word Lord, comes from the Hebrew word (*'Adonay*) and refers to the Lord it is used as a proper name of God (my) Lord and means to rule as the sovereign controller (human or divine) it embraces the titles, lord, master and owner. While Abraham is sitting at his tent door under the cool of the trees at Mamre, three men appear to him, Abraham aware he is not a perfect man begins his conversation with the words, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight," which means that there was something about these men that instilled a sense of awe and holy reverence in Abraham. What it was about these three means that instilled this sense of awe, wonder and reverence we can only speculate at the moment, but it does become a little clearer as we travel through the chapter. Abraham is very keen to spend time with these three men, he humbles himself, washes their feet, and invites them to rest under the cool shade of the trees, while Sarah prepares a meal. While eating, the men ask Abraham, "Where is Sarah your wife?" Abraham tells the three men she is in the tent. It is interesting to notice in the following verses that it is not the three men who speak to Abraham, but the LORD.

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## GENESIS 18:10-15

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### The LORD tells Abraham Sarah will have a Son.

- **Genesis 18:10-15:** 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. <sup>11</sup>Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. <sup>12</sup>So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" <sup>13</sup>The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' <sup>14</sup>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." <sup>15</sup>But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."

Now it is the LORD is speaking to Abraham. Abraham was ninety-nine (Gen. 17:1) and Sarah, being ten years younger was eighty-nine and therefore past the age of bearing children, so when she heard the LORD say that she would give birth to a son next year she laughed. Sarah is struck with a sense of humour in her inner most being at the thought that

a ninety-year-old woman and a hundred-year-old man could have a baby and thinks within herself (or better within her mind), "Can such a couple have a child?" Following are the two most common thoughts amongst commentators concerning Sarah's laughter:

1. Sarah being past the age of bearing children doubted what God was saying and therefore laughed at the thought of it.
2. Sarah's laughter was not laughter of doubt, but of joyful and grateful surprise.

If Sarah's laughter was laughter of joyful belief in what the LORD was saying she would have had no need to deny the fact she laughed, or feel a sense of guilt and fear when the LORD asked, why she laughed. Added to this, if her laugh was a laugh of absolute belief the LORD would have taken delight in it and would not have had to say, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (v14) or repeat the promise a second time (v14). Though Sarah doubted, no one can stand up in self-righteousness and condemn her, since we don't know in what form the LORD actually appeared to her. In this story the LORD appears as three angels appearing as men that ate with Abraham and it seems that the LORD was by His Spirit one of these angels that spoke to him. It will become clearer as we approach the end of the chapter. Added to this it is certain Abraham and Sarah had tried many times to conceive and now Sarah is past the age of bearing children and she is told she will now give birth to a son. I wonder how we might respond given the same circumstances. It is clear God wasn't offended He still exalted her above almost all women spoken of in the Bible with the exception of the Virgin Mary. The LORD knowing the heart and understanding Abraham's and Sarah's circumstances would have understood their joyful doubt and most likely felt a great delight in His heart knowing He was going to bless her with a son, the greatest gift a woman during these ancient times could be blessed with.

**Shall I have pleasure?** (v12) this question of Sarah's could apply to the pleasure of sex in marriage or to the pleasure and joy of giving birth to a child or to a mother's joy of holding her own child in her arms and the joy of nurturing and raising them.

**Is anything too hard for the LORD?** (v14) some use this verse to support the teaching if Christians learn certain keys of faith that they teach they will attain to a level of faith whereby they will be able to claim whatever they want, because nothing is too hard for the LORD. It is true that nothing is too hard for the LORD since He created all things and is the source of all life, but it is not true that every Christian can have whatever they want.

Following are two things that should be noticed here:

1. The LORD is the initiator of this blessing to Sarah she had totally given up any hope of having her own child years ago. (Hagar and Ishmael are evidence of this).
2. This son God is about to bless Sarah with, becomes a head father of the nation of Israel and from his bloodline comes Israel's Messiah the Christ.

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## GENESIS 18:16

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### The men Go to Sodom and Abraham sent them on their Way.

- **Genesis 18:16:** Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.

Now the focus shifts from the LORD, to the men leaving Abraham to go to Sodom when we pick up this story in the following chapter, we read in the very first verse that not three men arrive at Sodom, but two angels.

- The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth. (Genesis 19:1).

It appears that two of the men that appeared to Abraham were angels that appeared before him as men, this would explain why Abraham was struck with awesome reverence when they came to him at first, while the third man was the LORD appearing by His Spirit as one of the men. This idea is very possible since the Bible teaches that:

- Angels are God's agents on earth that act amongst mankind.
- Angels speak a human language that people understand.
- Angels appear very awesome when appearing as a man.
- Angels appear before men who often do not know it was an angel.
- Angels speak and act for God.
- Angels often speak as though they are the LORD.
- Angels are not bound by our laws of physics and laws of science in any way.

**Angels can be seen as:** God's presence, God's voice and God's power appearing to man in a form that will not destroy him. Should God appear to any descendant of Adam (which we all are) in His fullness and Holiness His presence would destroy them.

- God said, "You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." (Exod. 33:20).

This is why God always appears surrounded in dark clouds, fire or as some form of spiritual angelic being. It is certain that the invisible, Immortal Eternal Almighty Holy God of creation, the source of all life and Omnipotent God the Eternal Spirit is able to take on various spiritual angelic manifestations as he did to Moses in the burning bush (Exod. 3:2), to Hagar as she fled to Egypt (Gen. 16:7-9) and to others to reveal to them His eternal plans that He purposed in His eternal mind before the foundations of the world for mankind's salvation on earth and His plans and purposes for their lives. For further information see the folder title:

- Angels (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## GENESIS 18:17-21

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### The LORD sees, that the Outcry against Sodom's is Great.

- **Genesis 18:17-21:** The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, <sup>18</sup>seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? <sup>19</sup>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." <sup>20</sup>Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, <sup>21</sup>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."

These verses begin with the LORD speaking to the men and later to Abraham (v23).

**Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do:** (v17) better, the things I am about to do. Following maybe some of the reasons the LORD is speaking in the manner of men:

- The LORD is explaining the judgment of Sodom to Abraham so that he may teach his household to avoid the sins of these doomed cities and thereby encourage them to keep the ways of the LORD.

- The LORD knows Lot and his family are dwelling at Sodom and that Abraham loves Lot. Therefore, He reveals to him what He is about to do to give Abraham time to intercede for Lot and his family.
- These cities lie in the land that God promised to Abraham therefore it was right and proper to inform him what was about to happen to them.

The following Scriptures show that Abraham was a friend of the LORD and the LORD was his friend:

- The Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. (James 2:23).
- Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend. (Isaiah 41:8).

This highlights another reason the LORD was speaking in the manner of men, friends share everything with each other, Abraham was a friend of the LORD and as such the LORD treats him as His friend by revealing His secrets to him.

### **That the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him:**

(v19 a great part of Abraham's calling was not only that he prayed with and for his family, but that he would teach his household justice and the righteous ways of the LORD. Those who live contrary to God's ways should not expect blessings from the LORD. The judgments of the LORD on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the judgments upon the generations of Noah act as a warning to all mankind.

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## **GENESIS 18:22-32**

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### **The Men go to Sodom, but Abraham still Stood before the LORD.**

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- **Genesis 18:22-32:** So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. <sup>23</sup>Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? <sup>24</sup>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? <sup>25</sup>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?" <sup>26</sup>And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." <sup>27</sup>Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. <sup>28</sup>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." <sup>29</sup>Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." <sup>30</sup>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." <sup>31</sup>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." <sup>32</sup>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."

This section is Abraham speaking to the LORD (also referred to as the Lord) and the LORD speaking to Abraham. Two of the men leave Abraham to go to Sodom while Abraham stood before the LORD (i.e., the third man). For further information concerning this, see the notes following (v16) titled, "The men Leave to Go to Sodom and Abraham sent them on their Way," (above).

**Abraham intercedes:** clearly the LORD knows that the sins of Sodom have reached their peak, but He also knows Abraham's great love for Lot and his family so He reveals to Abraham what he is about to do and then gives him an opportunity to intercede for the people of Sodom.

Abraham fully aware that he is but dust and ashes before the LORD (v27) draws near to Him and asks will He sweep away the righteous with the wicked if there are:

- Fifty righteous within the city.
- Forty-five righteous within the city.
- Forty righteous within the city.
- Thirty righteous within the city.
- Twenty righteous within the city.
- Ten righteous within the city.
- For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

The following verses show that the angels attempted to save Lot and his wife and their two daughters and their husbands from the destruction of Sodom:

- Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. <sup>15</sup>As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city." (Gen. 19:14-15).

This means that the angels tried to save six people, but not because they were righteous, but for the sake of Abraham. The two sons in law, did not believe Lot, his wife disobeyed the LORD and looked back (Gen. 19:26) and Lot (Abraham's nephew) attempted to give his daughters to the rampaging mob of men outside his house (Gen. 19:4-5) and sometime later got so drunk that these same two daughters became pregnant by him. The firstborn gave birth to Moab (the father of the Moabites) and the younger daughter gave birth to Benammi (the father of the Ammonites) (Gen. 19:36-38). The descendants of these two sons became two of Israel's greatest enemies. God told Abraham He would spare the city if there were ten righteous people in it, but God could not even find ten. In the following chapter we read:

- So, it was when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived. <sup>30</sup>Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. (Genesis 19:29-30).

This lesson this story shines a light upon is the truth that when creation has become so corrupt and all the evil within it reaches before the Creator, He as the Judge of all the earth has the right to put an end to it, and will do so.

**NOTE:** many use this story to condemn men and women in peaceful loving committed same sex relationships, but this I feel is reading a preconceived mindset into the story and more than is actually there. These men are not in a loving committed relationship, but are fiercely violent, evil and ungodly men attacking Lot's house with the intention of raping his two guests (angels in Gen. 19:1). Added this it wasn't just Sodom that was destroyed, but five cities. The following Scriptures show what the sin of Sodom was before the LORD:

- Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. <sup>50</sup>They were haughty (i.e., arrogant, conceited self-important) and did an abomination (i.e., acts that outraged the LORD and caused Him great loathing) before me. So I removed them, when I saw it. (Ezek. 16:49-50).

For further information concerning same sex relationships see the title:

- Same Sex Relationships (ON WEBSITE MENU).



**The LORD finishes Speaking to Abraham and went his Way.**

- **Genesis 18:33:** And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Not only is the determination and perseverance of Abraham shown to be remarkable as he repeats his prayer of intercession six times, every time diminishing the number of the righteous, but the patience of the LORD is also shown to be remarkable in that in every case He grants Abraham his petition and had ten righteous people been found He would not have destroyed the cities. Abraham ends his prayer of intercession, and the purpose of the LORD visiting him was fulfilled, so the LORD leaves him. Abraham, no doubt with a certain sense of anticipation waiting to see what would become of Sodom and Gomorrah returns to his tent in the plains of Mamre.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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