

Gen. 18:1 And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

Gen. 18:2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

Abraham was really a privileged person. This chapter begins with another personal visit of the Lord to Abraham. The Lord has two other companions with Him who are unidentified. I assume they are angels. (9/06) The writer of Hebrews tells us that we could be entertaining angels when we entertain strangers, so we know they take human form.

Heb. 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

It's obvious that Abraham recognizes his visitors by sight. He hurries out to meet them when he sees them coming and bows low to the ground (in reverence I'm sure).

Gen. 18:3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

Gen. 18:4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

Gen. 18:5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

Gen. 18:6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.

Gen. 18:7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

Gen. 18:8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

Abraham then invites the trio to rest awhile and have something to eat for refreshment. Again, it doesn't seem that Abraham thinks it odd for the Lord and His companions to be walking near his home. He also seems to understand that they are headed somewhere else ("after that ye shall pass on" v5). Abraham was a rich man. The fact that he identified himself as "thy servant" (v3) and goes to the herd to choose the best calf himself are other indications that he recognized his important visitors.

Gen. 18:9 And they said unto him, Where *is* Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

Gen. 18:10 And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard *it* in the tent door, which *was* behind him.

Gen. 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah *were* old *and* well stricken in age; *and* it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

Gen. 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

Gen. 18:13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

Gen. 18:14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Gen. 18:15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

The visitors inquire of Sarah's whereabouts. (They know his wife by name; another clue to an established relationship.) Abraham tells them that she is in the tent. Then the Lord tells Abraham that when He comes to see him at this time next year, Sarah will have a son. (9/06) This event is evidently not long after events of the previous chapter.

Sarah has been eavesdropping on the conversation. She is now old and past the age of childbearing, so she laughs to herself at the thought of having a child at this age—when she is “waxed old.” The Lord hears Sarah's thoughts and asked Abraham why Sarah laughed in disbelief. He emphasizes just who is making this statement—“Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” When Sarah realized just whom she had offended, she was afraid. So---she lied. She denied laughing (which admitted she was eavesdropping). But the Lord lets her know that He heard her.

We can lie to ourselves and lie to others, but we can never lie to God. Knowing just who He is makes it all the more amazing that we ever think we have any secrets from Him. I think I give myself more of an excuse sometimes since I've never seen God in person like Adam and Eve or Noah or Abraham and Sarah. But it makes no difference. I know all of His attributes. I know He knows all of my thoughts and actions. So why do I continue to make poor choices???? My desire is to “practice the presence of God in my life.” How/why do I get so easily sidetracked and/or lose sight of that truth?

Gen. 18:16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

Gen. 18:17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

Gen. 18:18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

Gen. 18:19 For 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.

The men get up to leave and Abraham decides to walk with them a bit. They headed toward Sodom. The Lord decides to tell Abraham what is going to happen to Sodom after He reiterates the blessing to come on Abraham ---how he will become a great and powerful nation and that ALL nations would be blessed through him. He emphasizes again that Abraham was chosen (specifically singled out) as one the Lord could count on to direct his children to “keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.” The wording appears to indicate to me that God is telling us His thoughts at the time and not sharing them with Abraham.

Again, it is obvious that the people know what is pleasing to the Lord (“they shall keep the way of the Lord”). They don’t have the ten commandments or even a scroll of scripture. It’s also clear that God has communicated personally as He chose to from Adam and Eve until now. I think it is safe to assume that He made personal contact with many more of whom we haven’t been told. We haven’t been given a complete history by any means. We are just told what is needed for a firm foundation of our faith in God and all that He is and His provision for sinful man.

Gen. 18:20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

Gen. 18:21 I 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.

Now it seems that the Lord is talking out loud to Abraham. He tells Abraham that the “cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great.” Is this cry from the people in the city or from “righteous” people who are forced to interact with its residents or even from holy angels observing from above? (9/06) Maybe it was the cry of Lot’s heart (cf comments at 19:15-17). He is headed there to see if the accusations (cries) He is hearing are true. (Why would He word it this way? He is “all seeing” and “all knowing.” He didn’t have to come down---except to instruct Abraham.....and us).

(11/05) What was the great sin of Sodom? Homosexuality / sexual perversion is most prominent, but Ezekiel gives a clearer explanation.

Ezek. 16:49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

Ezek. 16:50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw *good*.

Gen. 18:22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

Gen. 18:23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

Gen. 18:24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?

Gen. 18:25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Gen. 18:26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

Gen. 18:27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but* dust and ashes:

Gen. 18:28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack of five*? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

Gen. 18:29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do *it* for forty’s sake.

Gen. 18:30 And he said *unto him*, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

Gen. 18:31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

Gen. 18:32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake.

Gen. 18:33 And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Abraham has already shown his reverence for the Lord, and now he shows his faith and confidence in Him as his Provider/Counselor/Friend. The two men head on to Sodom, but Abraham tarries before the Lord. He has a question. He begins a dialogue with the Lord to determine His willingness to save the cities if a few righteous people could be found in them. First, he asks if fifty righteous people would justify saving the cities. (The Lord already knows exactly what is happening and how many, if any, righteous people are in the cities.)

Abraham is quite bold in the manner and persistence of his questions to the Lord. It's hard for me to imagine ever—even in heaven—feeling that comfortable with the Lord, the one who knows everything about me—every thought I don't want to have but can't control continually confronts me with the fact that I am a sinner—saved by grace—BUT a sinner. I can desire and strive to do the right things, but it always feels like I take three steps backwards for every step forward.

Abraham's discourse with the Lord ended with an agreement that He would spare Sodom for the sake of ten righteous people. The Lord then left (to where?) and Abraham went back home.

I assume Abraham's concern with the destruction of Sodom was because that is where his nephew Lot lived with his family. Yet, we are not told that he rushed to warn him of the impending doom. His faith was so great in the Lord's justice that he just returned home.

It's interesting that Abraham based his argument on God's righteousness in judgment and the Lord didn't deny the rightness of his reasoning. This is just another affirmation of the rapture of the church to me. The Day of the Lord, the tribulation, is a time of God's wrath against the wicked.

Is. 13:9-13 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the

earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.
He will surely remove the "righteous in Christ" before exacting judgment just as surely as He removed Lot.