

# Genesis 18: The Promised birth of Isaac and Abraham Pleads for Sodom

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## Introduction

My notes for Living Messiah Ministries Sabbath Study 1/16/2016<sup>a</sup>

### Outline

- 1-8 The Lord appears to Abraham, who entertains angels.
- 9-15 Sarah is reproved for laughing at the promise of a son.
- 16-22 The destruction of Sodom is revealed to Abraham.
- 23-33 Abraham makes intercession for its inhabitants.

## Previous verses – Answering the question Who is him found in Gen 18:1

### Gen 17:24-27 –Is there a big gap of time between chapter 17 & 18 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>25</sup>And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine <sup>99</sup>, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>25</sup> And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>26</sup> In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. <sup>27</sup> And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

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<sup>a</sup> See <http://livingmessiah.com/bboard.html#sched> in addition there is also Isaiah 33:17 - 34:12 Luke 8:40-56

<sup>b</sup> Notes from Glenn McWilliams (GM).

“And YHVH appeared unto him...”

Good grammar states that you can't start a sentence with a pronoun which is what Gen 18:1 does. To him is he appearing?

GM states “without identifying for us to whom the pronoun “him” refers. The identifying proper noun “Abraham” last appeared in Gen 17:26 and does not appear again until Gen 18:6, leaving us wondering whom the pronoun – “him” is referring to in Gen 18:1. The absence of the identifying proper noun “Abraham” at the beginning of this chapter has led many to assume that this verse belongs to the previous story of Abraham’s circumcision. In other words, the text should be read as follows: See Gen 17:24-27 + Gen 18:1.

## Genesis 18 verses 1-33

<sup>1</sup> And YHVH appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

<sup>2</sup> And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men (*she-lo-Shah*<sup>H7969</sup> 'a-na-Shim<sup>H376</sup>) stood (*nitsavim*)<sup>c</sup> by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,  
Is this “trinity” or is this the Messiah and two messengers/angels?

<sup>3</sup> And said, *Adonai* My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:  
Hospitality is Important; “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers (*philonexia*<sup>G5381</sup>): for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Heb 13:2

See my notes on Adonai Gen 18:3 KJV – Grammar notes

<sup>4</sup> Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

<sup>5</sup> And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on, (*ta·'a·Vo·ru*<sup>H5674</sup> *avar*) for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

See my notes on Passover Indicators Gen 18:6, 12

<sup>7</sup> 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.

The last two words of the Hebrew text ends with Aleph Tav Vav

.o. To : אתו la·'a· Sot to dress לעשות...

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> And they said unto him, Where *is* Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

The “strangers” or “angels” know Sarah's new name which was just given in the previous chapter.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> Now Abraham and Sarah *were* old *and* well stricken in age; *and* it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? See notes at Gen 18:12 Sarah Laughed at herself – more about the Passover

<sup>13</sup> And YHVH said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? See notes at Gen 18:13 Wherefore did Sarah Laugh

<sup>14</sup> Is any thing too hard for YHVH? At the time appointed (*moadim*) I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

<sup>c</sup> First use of *nitsavim*, see "Word Study H5324 Natsav Stood(est)/Stand(ing)(eth), officer(s)", Article [291](#)

- 15 Then Sarah denied (*kachash*<sup>H3584</sup>), saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.
- 16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.
- 17 And YHVH said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;  
Reveals to his prophets: Pro 25:1-3 and 1Co 2:7-16  
This is an interesting verse for a couple of reasons. 1<sup>st</sup> it appears that YHVH is having a conversation with himself or it's showing his "Echadness". 2<sup>nd</sup> what exactly is it that triggered YHVH to no longer hide *HaMeKaSeH*<sup>H3680</sup> *kasah* this information. what is the intent of YHVH (which contextually is about the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah).
- 18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?  
See my notes on Gen 18:18 Commentary
- 19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of YHVH, to do justice and judgment; that YHVH may bring upon Abraham that אֵת which he hath spoken of him.  
Might this standalone Aleph Tav be the one that Abram say in the recounting of the stars where Abram was determined to be righteous (Gen 15:5-6)?  
YHVH has faith that Abraham keeps his house in order. See 2Pe 2:7. Lot may have been "righteous" compared to the rest of Sodom, but it seems to me that Lot, unlike Abraham didn't have his house in order. His wife wanted to turn back to Sodom. What separated Abraham and Lot to begin with was that the herdsman couldn't get along with each other. I'll bet it was because Lot couldn't or wouldn't control his herdsman.
- 20 And YHVH said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;
- 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.
- 22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before YHVH.  
**Abraham stood yet before YHVH.** The primitive text read "Jehovah stood yet before Abraham." One of the 18 emendations of the *Sopherim*. See App-33.
- 23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous (*tsaddik*<sup>H6662</sup>)<sup>d</sup> with the wicked?
- 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?
- 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?
- 26 And YHVH said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.
- 27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto *Adonai*<sup>the Lord</sup>, which *am* *but* dust and ashes:

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<sup>d</sup> righteous (*tsaddik*<sup>H6662</sup>) is found seven times in this chapter (verses 23-28), a style not as *leitwort*, or *mila mancha*

- <sup>28</sup> 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*.
- <sup>29</sup> 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.
- <sup>30</sup> And he said *unto him*, Oh let not *Adonai* <sup>the Lord</sup> 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.
- <sup>31</sup> And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto *Adonai* <sup>the Lord</sup>: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.
- <sup>32</sup> And he said, Oh let not *Adonai* <sup>the Lord</sup> 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.
- <sup>33</sup> And YHVH went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

## Emendations

Emendations are found in these verses Gen 18:3, 27, 30 & 32. The remaining of these in Gen is Gen 19:18, 20:4. Here is a blurb about the subject on my website MyHebrewBible.Com <sup>e</sup>

The question of the [Masoretes](#) changing the Tanach get's people excited. The idea that the text needs fixing (Hebrew *Tikkune Soferim*) enables the possibility for theology to be injected by the one doing the fixing. With that said, this page lists some of the changes that have been made. Here's a reference from Wikipedia ([www.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic\\_Text](http://www.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text)).

Early rabbinic sources, from around 200 CE, mention several passages of Scripture in which the conclusion is inevitable that the ancient reading must have differed from that of the present text. The explanation of this phenomenon is given in the expression ("Scripture has used euphemistic language", i.e. to avoid [anthropomorphism](#) and [anthropopathy](#)).

Rabbi Simon ben Pazzi (3rd century) calls these readings "emendations of the Scribes" (*tikkune Soferim*; Midrash Genesis Rabbah xlix. 7), assuming that the Scribes actually made the changes. This view was adopted by the later Midrash and by the majority of Masoretes. In Masoretic works these changes are ascribed to [Ezra](#); to Ezra and [Nehemiah](#); to Ezra and the [Soferim](#); or to Ezra, Nehemiah, [Zechariah](#), [Haggai](#), and [Baruch](#). All these ascriptions mean one and the same thing: that the changes were assumed to have been made by the Men of the [Great Synagogue](#).

The term *tikkun Soferim* (סופרים תקון) has been understood by different scholars in various ways. Some regard it as a correction of Biblical language authorized by the Soferim for homiletical purposes. Others take it to mean a mental change made by the original writers or redactors of Scripture; i.e. the latter shrank from putting in writing a thought which some of the readers might expect them to express.

The assumed emendations are of four general types:

- Removal of unseemly expressions used in reference to God; e.g., the substitution of ("to bless") for ("to curse") in certain passages.
- Safeguarding of the [Tetragrammaton](#); e.g. substitution of "Elohim" for "YHVH" in some passages.

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<sup>e</sup> See <http://www.myhebrewbible.com/ById/4/1#introduction-4-LM>

- Removal of application of the names of pagan gods, e.g. the change of the name "Ishbaal" to "Ishbosheth."
- Safeguarding the unity of divine worship at [Jerusalem](#).

*Tikkune Soferim* [Wikipedia](#).

The Wikipedia entry listed above for **Tikkune Soferim** is found under the broader entry [Fixing the Text](#). This is mentioned because first it's a good read, and second because it's discusses the topics [Suspended letters and dotted words \(3.3\)](#) and [Inverted letters \(3.4\)](#) which are related to another verse list found in **My Hebrew Bible** called [Jot's and Tittles](#).

- 3.1 Scribal emendations – Tikkune Soferim
- 3.2 Mikra and ittur
- 3.3 **Suspended letters and dotted words**
- 3.4 **Inverted letters**

### **The "Eighteen Emendations" of the Sopherim - Appendix 33 From The Companion Bible.**

The Massorah (Appendix 30) that is to say, the small writing in the margins of the standard Hebrew codices, as shown in the plate at the bottom of Appendix 30, consists of a concordance of words and phrases, etc., safeguarding the Sacred Text.

A note in the Massorah against several passages in the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible states: "This is one of the Eighteen Emendations of the Sopherim," or words of that effect.

Complete lists of these emendations are found in the Massorah of most of the model or standard codices of the Hebrew Bible, and these are not always identical; so that the total number exceeds eighteen: from which it would appear that these examples are simply typical.

The Siphri<sup>1</sup> adduces seven passages; the Yalkut,<sup>2</sup> ten; the Mechiltha,<sup>3</sup> eleven; the Tanchuma,<sup>4</sup> seventeen; while the St. Petersburg Codex gives two passages not included in any other list (Malachi 1: 12 ; 3: 9 ; see below).

These emendations were made at a period long before Christ, before the Hebrew text had obtained its present settled form, and these emendations affect the Figure called Anthropopatheia. See Appendix 6.

The following is a list of the eighteen "Emendations," together with eight others not included in the official lists. Particulars will be found on consulting the notes on the respective passages.

Gen. 18:22.	2Chron. 10:16.	Ecc. 3:21.
Num. 11:15.	Job 1:5.	Jer. 2:11.
Num. 12:12.	Job 1:11.	Lam. 3:20.
1Sam. 3:13.	Job 2:5.	Ezek. 8:17.
2Sam. 12:14.	Job 2:9.	Hos. 4:7.
2Sam. 16:12.	Job 7:20.	Hab. 1:12.
1Kings 12:16.	Job 32:3.	Zech. 2:8 (12).
1Kings 21:10.	Ps. 10:3.	Mal. 1:13.

1Kings 21:13.	Ps. 106:20.	Mal. 3:9.
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## NOTES

1 An ancient commentary on Leviticus (circa A.D. 219-47).

2 A catena of the whole Hebrew Scriptures, composed in the eleventh century, from ancient sources by Rabbi Simeon.

3 An ancient commentary on Exodus, compiled about A.D. 90 by Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisa.

4 A commentary on the Pentateuch, compiled from ancient sources by Rabbi Tanchuma ben Abba, about A.D. 380

## Gen 18:3 KJV – Grammar notes

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

Example of KJV's use of Old English

Singular Plural

thou	ye
thee	you
thy	your
thine	yours

From looking at the pronouns in Gen 18:3, we see that Abraham is referring to "Lord" in the singular.

GM: Abraham idiomatically uses the plural form of the appellative, it is quite clear that he is addressing only one of the visitors as "Adonai"....

appellative

Adjective: Relating to or denoting the giving of a name.

Noun: A common noun, such as “doctor,” “mother,” or “sir,” used as a vocative.

Synonyms: appellation - name - designation - title

Example the use of LORD in the KJV is the appellative of for YHVH.

On occasions where the name YHWH and the title "Adonai" appear together, the English translations will use the word "GOD", also in all uppercase letters, to hide the name e.g. Gen 9:26 & Gen 15:2.

## End Notes

### Gen 18:6, 12: Passover Indicators source Ahavta

Here we see basic ingredients of the Passover Seder.

- 1) Note that circumcision is required preceding Passover.
- 2) Avraham told Sarah to quickly
- 3) (no chametz/leaven) make three seahs of meal into bread discs (matzah – v. Gen\_19:3 JKM: This is the next chapter regarding Lot?)
- 4) of fine flour – each being one omer (the amount of fine flour obtained from one seah of meal).
- 5) He washed the feet of the three men Gen\_18:4 . He himself (not servants)
- 6) prepared a choice animal (Gen\_18:7). It had been about noon (heat of the day) when Yahweh appeared to him, “and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.” (JKM: ?)

#### Indicators

- Gen 17:9-14 Circumcision is instituted
- Gen 17:23-27 Abraham and Ishmael are circumcised
- Gen 18:6
- Gen 18:12
- Gen 19:2 washing of the feet, Lot insisting that they stay not in the gates of Sodom (John 13 washing of the feet)
- Gen 19:3 Unleavened bread
- Gen 19:10 In the passover, your required to be inside the house so that the "angel of death" will "passover" your house.
- Gen 19:13 YHVH has set the melekim to destroy

#### Other Passover References

- Gen 21:4.
- Exo 12:43-51 The ordinance of the Passover
- Jos 5:2-9 Joshua renews circumcision.

### Gen 18:12 Sarah Laughed at herself – more about the Passover source Ahavta

(V. 12) “And Sarah laughed at herself” – literally, Sarah laughed at her insides, which is taken to mean that, at eighty-nine years old, her cycle started. The angel said that at this same time – this “appointed time” (Passover) – next year, she would give birth. Now we may understand why the sages say that Isaac was born at the time of the Passover offering.

She is asking this in form of a question.

Gen 18:14 it uses *moadim*.

... pleasure, H5730 eden ...

H5730 eden/ednah Ayin Dalet Noon

KJC: 4

delicates, 1 Jer\_51:34

delights, 1 2Sa\_1:24

pleasure, 1 Gen\_18:12

pleasures, 1 Psa\_36:8

H5731 eden Ayin Dalet Noon

KJC: 20 Gen\_2:8 (2), Gen\_2:10, Gen\_2:15, Gen\_3:23-24 (2), Gen\_4:16, 2Ch\_29:12 (2), 2Ch\_31:15, Isa\_37:12, Isa\_51:3, Eze\_27:23, Eze\_28:13, Eze\_31:9, Eze\_31:16, Eze\_31:18 (2), Eze\_36:35, Joe\_2:3, Amo\_1:5

## Gen 18:13 Wherefore did Sarah Laugh

A respect of chain of authority or is Sarah clueless about this news? When this story is first told, [Gen 17:16-17](#), it mentions that Abraham was the only one being told. In the previous verse, [Gen 18:12](#), Sarah laughs after hearing of this amazing and unbelievable news, but in this verse, [Gen 18:13](#), YHVH talks to Abraham and asks him why she laughed. It could very well be that YHVH is respecting the chain of command, but could his inquiry be more like "you (Abraham) didn't tell your wife what I told you in the previous chapter?"

The whole story of this miraculous birth (at least as it is described in this chapter) is contained in these verses [Gen 18:9-15](#). At first glance when you read this story, it comes across as though Sarah is being chastised for her lack of faith. I'm not saying that's not true, but is a more accurate understanding of the story, based on the insight from the previous chapter, that YHVH is if not angry but at least upset with Abraham and poor Sarah received the brunt of YHVH's emotion. If YHVH is more disappointed at Abraham than at Sarah then the question is why. You could argue that it's just a man not communicating with his wife very well, but I find that hard to believe given the scope and how miraculous the event in question is. Could it be that Abraham didn't want to tell Sarah because he wasn't sure how she would have reacted. Or maybe it really is indicative of Abraham's lack of faith, so why tell your 90 year old wife that she's going to have a child when he doesn't really believe it himself. Abraham could have rationalized that if it happens it happens and then he could have told Sarah what YHVH had told him.

BCR

...shall I of a surety [H637 hAF H552 umnam](#) bear a child, [H3205](#) ...

Look at how loaded these words are with their use of commercial terms.

**Surety** is like a co-signer on a loan.

Bear: A bearer of a bill or note

Eve and Cain, both were the first to experience this (giving birth and being born) in the "bizarro world", See [Gen 4:1](#).

A bearer bond is a debt security issued by a business entity, such as a corporation, or by a government. It differs from the more common types of investment securities in that it is unregistered – no records are kept of the owner, or the transactions involving ownership. Whoever physically holds the paper on which the bond is issued owns the instrument.

### Word Study like notes from e-Sword not listed

H551 'omnâm, H544 'ômen, H539 'âman, H541 'âman, H3225 yâmîyn, H3231 yâman

## Gen 18:18 Commentary

He changes Abrams name to Abraham increasing the magnitude of who will be blessed, but now, right of the bat, he is going to destroy people in Sodom and Gomorrah. Interesting contrast. I say he will destroy them, but right now he has to give them due process and verify that the claims made against them are accurate see [Gen 18:20](#).

YHVH is respecting the delegated authority given to Abraham (in a sense) because he has some authority as the father of many nations. He has a record of this because he is righteous with his only family. Think about it, doesn't Y'shua AND Israel judge the earth? Read Rev 21 and 22. The Elohim of Abraham becomes the Elohim of Jacob i.e. Israel.

Doesn't a father rule and reign over his household? Isn't an aspect of "being a father of many nations" ([Gen 17:5](#)) imply that he (and ultimately the children of Israel) will rule over his family i.e. the nations.

One of the most important aspects of ruling over a family/nation is to adjudicate matters.

One could argue that there is a question of jurisdiction. If YHVH did not at least give notice to Abraham, who 1) was delegated the authority to be a father of many nations. and 2) has now shown he can be a responsible person, then Abraham e.t. al. might not respect this delegated power.

## [Gen 18:19](#) Commentary

This verse has a Standalone Aleph Tav and two "hyphenated" Aleph Tav, one of which is preceded by a Vav.

[Gen 18:19 KJV](#) For I know him, that he will command <sup>Aleph Tav-</sup> his children and <sup>Aleph Tav-</sup> his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the YHVH, to do justice and judgment; that YHVH may bring upon Abraham that **Aleph Tav** which he hath spoken of him.

The commandments of YHVH will be the commandments of Avraham to his children and those who are not his children, but in his house. The hyphenated Aleph Tav's are sandwiched in between the command and his household.

The Standalone Aleph Tav is sandwiched in between the Abraham and "which he hath spoken of him". which begs the question what does "which he hath spoken of him" really mean.

"...which he hath spoken of him" [Gen 18:19](#). What is it that has been spoken of him...well there is a lot. It was spoken/promised to Abram/Abraham...

to be the father of many nations which I've already discussed is about being the authoritative figure who adjudicates matters.

in the chapter on the Covenant of the Pieces (found in Gen 15) that it was accounted unto him for Righteousness (Gen 15:6).

The context of this chapter is the two *Melechim* revealing to Sarah the future promised son Isaac.

This chapter contextually also speaks about adjudication and judgment. Therefore could it also mean "what you bind on earth is bound in heaven". See for example Mat 16:18-19<sup>1</sup> and Mat 18:18-20<sup>2</sup> where Y'shua speaks about his disciples about the power and authority they have in matters of adjudication.

<sup>1</sup> Context is Mat 16:13-17 which is about Y'shua asking the disciples 1) "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" and then 2) "But who do you say that I am?" . Peter confesses and says you are Meshiach, Son of the Living Elohim.

<sup>2</sup> Context is Mat 18:15-17 is about the process of adjudication for brothers in the church i.e. the private side or courts of ecclesia.

"...all the nations will be blessed"

How will all the nations of the earth be blessed? The next verse Gen 18:19 answers the question. They will be blessed because Abraham and the children of Abraham will (or should) adjudicate matters in alignment with Torah. When those people reign all the people, even those who for the most part, are clueless about Torah, will also be blessed. The next verse after that Gen 18:20 gives us the contrast where we have cities that has been charged with very grievous sins which is a result of not respecting Torah. The charge is that they are acting like those who live during the time of Noah.