

VAYERA (and he appeared)



Abraham and the Three Angels

Genesis 18:1 And יהוה appeared to him in the plains of Mamre (*vigor/lusty*): and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day (*healing from his circumcision*).

Question: Why did יהוה come to visit Abraham? It was the third day from his circumcision when the wound is most painful and he was the most weakened, and יהוה came and inquired about his welfare. When people carry out great deeds of obedience, יהוה shows himself to them as a token of tribute and honor.

Question: Do you think that visiting the sick actually helps them to recover? When a person isn't well, besides his physical weakness he can feel emotionally down, which can make it harder to recover. Knowing - and seeing - that people care enough to visit him can give him the emotional boost he needs to heal properly.

Question: If a man looks down upon himself, what is a constant sign to him of his covenant with יהוה? The mark of the circumcision should remind a man to walk in the ways of יהוה, so he can receive the blessings of the covenant. When lust overtakes a man, he should look at the mark of the circumcision and keep himself pure before יהוה.

Question: Why did Abraham long for guests? Abraham was never content with past accomplishments, but he sought to serve יהוה at all times. Abraham's manner of service was through being kind to people, so he could inspire them with his example to learn about and serve יהוה.

Question: Is 'the world is built on acts of kindness' correct? When people work together and try to help each other out, the world transforms into a kinder, happier place and everyone benefits.

Question: Is it good enough to do good deeds as the opportunity comes our way, or should we actively seek them out? It is certainly good to do the good deeds that avail themselves to us, but one who seeks them out becomes a spiritual superman or woman.

Spiritual Exercise: Try to come up with a creative good deed to do. Perhaps something you can lend, free-of-charge, to others.



Abraham and the Three Angels (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

2 And he lifted up his eyes and looked and three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door and bowed (*worshiped*) himself toward the ground,

Question: Who came to Abraham first? And יהוה appeared to him (in spirit) in the plains of Mamre.

Question: Who were the three men who came to see Abraham? Did Yahshua come in human form to talk to Abraham? Scholars have always debated who the 3 men were speaking to Abram and who of the two went to Sodom and Gomorrah but both Abram and Lot bowed down and worshiped upon seeing these so-called Angels. An angel will never receive worship (Rev 19:10). This same Hebrew word *Angel* that is used to describe the two men who went to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:1) is used to describe the *Angel* who spoke to Moses from the burning bush who also received worship (Gen 3:2).

3 And Abraham said, My Adonai, if now *מצאתי* I found grace in your sight (*after being obedient to circumcision*), please do not leave your servant: 4 Let me get a little water and wash your feet and rest under the tree: 5 I will get a piece of bread to refresh you before you go on since you have come to your servant. And they said, Do as you have said. 6 And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly get ready three measures of fine grain, knead *it and* make cakes in the hearth (*oven*).

Question: Why did Abraham call the meal he was about to prepare “**a piece of bread**”? He provided them with bread and water until he could make the extravagant meal he was about to serve.

Question: Why did Abraham ask Sarah to make the bread when Sarah had many servants? Abraham wanted Sarah herself to perform the commandment of serving the guests so she could receive a blessing also. Since it was Passover, Abraham wanted Sarah to guard carefully over the dough to make sure there was no leavening in it. This shows that Abraham and Sarah fulfilled the commandments before the Torah was given



Giovanni Andrea de Ferrari, Italian, 1598-1669,
Abraham and the Three Angels, 1660-69, oil on canvas

7 And Abraham ran to the herd and got a choice tender calf and gave *it* to a young man; and he hurried to dress אֹתוֹ *it* (*him*). 8 And Abraham took butter, milk and the calf, which he had dressed and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree and they ate.

Question: Why did Abraham run? This portrays Abraham's great desire to show hospitality. Though he had many servants eager to serve him, and he was old and weak from his circumcision, he ran personally to choose the animals for the meat.



Abraham Stands by the Three Men under the Tree (illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*)

Question: Do angels eat? Angels do not eat in the human sense; they only appeared to eat. Angels, as spiritual beings, receive their sustenance from righteousness.

Question: What did Abraham serve the guests? Bread and butter, milk, and meat

Question: What reveals more about a person's true character: what he says or what he does? While words are important and do tell us something about a person, actions reveal much more. Often a person might say something to give a certain impression or because he feels that it is what he is 'supposed' to say. How a person actually behaves can really help you know how he feels inside.

Many times a person's actions speak louder than their words. Impressive sounding promises and claims are worth very little if they are not backed up by deeds. In fact when it comes to doing good to others, a person should try to do even more for somebody than he committed himself to do. When Abraham invited some weary desert travelers to stay at his home as guests, he offered them a piece of bread, thinking they would not be embarrassed to accept such a small bite to eat. But then he and his wife Sarah prepared them a great feast! Like Abraham, we should try our best to say little and do much.

Question: Why do you think it is better to promise less and do more rather than simply promise what you really think you can do? One of the highest values is integrity. A big part of this is the ability to stand behind one's word. Often when we make big promises we may even hope or expect to fulfill them. Yet perhaps we have over-estimated or not considered a factor, which might prevent us from doing what we said. In such a case we may end up letting down and actually harming someone that we have intended to help. By being modest with our promises, and then trying our best to give as much as we can we will often exceed our commitments and leave others pleasantly surprised.

Spiritual Exercise: Promise only what you know you can do. Keep all your promises just as if you promised them to יהוה.



Abraham feeds the angels

9 And they said to him, *Where is Sarah your wife?* And Abraham said, *She is in the tent.* **10** And He said, *I will certainly return to you at this time next year; and Sarah your wife will have a son.* And Sarah heard *it in the tent door which was behind him.*

Question: When was Sarah told that Isaac would be born? Sarah would have a son at this time, next year. It was Passover, and on the following Passover, Isaac was born.

11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well advanced in age; and Sarah was past the age of childbearing.

Question: What does it mean “well advanced in age”? Each day in a person's life carries with it its own challenge and mission. What is to be accomplished today cannot be postponed to tomorrow, because tomorrow has its own set of things to do. In the normal course of events, people go through life with their "spiritual calendars" marred by countless days and hours that were wasted or, even worse, misused. But the greatest people, such as Abraham and Sarah, come through life with all their days intact, all of them utilized properly and purposefully. They reached their old age with a rich harvest of days that truly mattered.

Spiritual Exercise: Are you procrastinating? Are you wasting countless days and hours that could be used properly and with purpose? Do not postpone until tomorrow what you can be doing today.



Three angels with Abraham, announcing the birth of Isaac
(woodcut by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld from the 1860 *Bible in Pictures*)



Sarah Hears and Laughs (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

12 Therefore, Sarah laughed within herself saying, After I have become old, will I have pleasure with my master (husband) who is old also?

Question: Why did Sarah question יהוה's ability to give her a child? Sarah looked at the natural and not the supernatural. She looked at her insides and said, "Is it possible that these insides will carry a child; that these breasts, which have dried up, will give forth milk?" Hasn't my menstrual cycles ceased to come?

Question: Did Abraham question יהוה or did he believe in יהוה? Abraham believed and it was counted to him as righteousness.

13 And יהוה said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh saying, Will I certainly bear a child since I am old? 14 Is anything too hard for מיהוה? At the time appointed I will return to you, at this time next year and Sarah will have a son.

Question: Is anything too hard for יהוה? Is anything too hidden and separated and concealed from Him to prevent Him from doing His will? Should we ever doubt His promises?

15 Then Sarah denied saying, I did not laugh because she was afraid. He said, Yes, you did laugh. 16 And the men rose up from there and went towards Sodom: and Abraham went with them along the way. 17 And ויהוה said, Will I hide from Abraham what I am doing? 18 Seeing that Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him?

Question: יהוה said, "Should I hide from Abraham what I am doing in Sodom?" יהוה wanted Abraham to have an opportunity to intercede in Sodom's behalf. יהוה wanted Abraham to know that the opportunity for repentance is always open to sinners (Sforno); or He wanted Abraham to know that if there had been some righteous people in Sodom, even if the rest of the population was overwhelmingly wicked, the righteous would be spared (Alshich).

19 For I know him, that he will command אֶת־ his children אֶת־ and his household after him and they will keep the way of יהוה, to do justice and judgment; that יהוה may bring upon Abraham אֶת־ that which He has spoken about him.

Question: What does it mean, "For I know him"? For if one loves a person, he draws him near to himself and knows him and is familiar with him.



Sarah Listens by William Hole

Question: Why does יהוה love Abraham? יהוה loved Abraham because of what he would teach (**command**) his children. One reveals his values by what he teaches his children. For one to preach morality but not repeat it over and over in one's own family reveals that the preaching is less than sincere. Whoever raises a righteous son is considered as though he does not die, because his righteousness lives on after him.

Question: How was the Israelite nation distinguished from other nations? They are compassionate, humble, and generous. We must practice the commandment of charity more than any other, because it is the characteristic of the true descendant of Abraham.

Spiritual Exercise: Are you practicing charity today? Are you giving to the poor? Are you helping the needy?



Give to those in need.

20 And יהוה said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah *is* great and because their sin *is* very severe; **21** I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the reports which *have* come to Me; and if not, I will know.

Question: What was the sin of Sodom? The cruelties of Sodom was selfishness, heartlessness, and sexual immorality (see chapter 19), but the root of their evil was greed. Sodom was a rich and fertile region, and it was a magnet for people seeking to make their fortune, as it was for Lot. But the Sodomites wanted to maintain their own prosperity and not be encumbered by a flood of poor immigrants. The wealthy and well-connected Lots of the world were welcome in Sodom, because they would give more to the economy than they would take. To discourage undesirable newcomers, however, the Sodomites institutionalized state cruelty, so that it became a crime to feed a starving person or offer alms to a beggar. Even the sexual perversion for which Sodom is notorious was employed to keep visitors away. Four times a year they would have festivals exchanging their wives and giving their virgin daughters to the men of the city to enjoy. The fate of Sodom was sealed because they did not help the poor and needy. The people of Sodom had fallen into such depravity that it was an act of mercy to remove them from the earth.

Question: Whose cry did יהוה hear from Sodom? יהוה heard the cry of the land from the innocent blood that had been shed upon it.

22 And the men left there and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood still before יהוה. **23** And Abraham drew near *to Him* and said, Will you destroy the righteous with the wicked? **24** Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city, will you destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* in it? **25** Far be it from you to do such a thing as this, to kill the righteous with the wicked: and *that* the righteous should be as the wicked that is far from you: won't the Judge of all the earth do what is right? **26** And יהוה said if I find in Sodom 50 righteous within the city, then I will spare all the places for their sakes



Abraham intercedes for the righteous

Question: What was Abraham interceding for? Abraham feared that present and future generations would lose faith in the fairness of יהוה's justice if they were to feel that יהוה had inflicted equal suffering on the righteous and the wicked. Abraham wanted יהוה to pour out mercy on the wicked for the sake of the righteous. Even the wicked inhabitants of Sodom engaged his sympathy, and he overflowed with sorrow over their impending doom. In response to his prayer, יהוה said that He would indeed exercise mercy (Ramban), but there was no one except for Lot who deserved to be saved.

Question: Who was considered righteous? The test of righteousness is that one is ready to act upon his convictions even in a hostile environment. Furthermore, the truly righteous person should be involved with his fellows, trying to influence them to improve.

27 And Abraham answered and said, Certainly now I who am *but* dust and ashes have taken upon myself to speak to Adonai: **28** Suppose there were *only* five less than the forty-five righteous, will you destroy for lack of five אֶחָד all the cities? And He said, If I find forty-five there, I will not destroy *it*. **29** And Abraham spoke to Him again and said, Suppose there are forty found there. And He said, I will not do *it* for forties sake. **30** And Abraham said *to Him*, let Adonai not be angry and I will speak: Suppose there are thirty found there. And He said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there. **31** And Abraham said, I have taken upon myself to speak to Adonai again: Suppose there are twenty found there. And He said, I will not destroy *it* for twenties sake. **32** And Abraham said, Let Adonai not be angry and I will speak one more time: Suppose ten are found there. And He said, I will not destroy *it* for tens sake.

Question: Why did Abraham not ask for less than ten to save the cities? Abraham said, "In the Generation of the Flood, there were eight: Noah and his sons, and their wives, but they did not save their generation. Why should I ask for less than ten righteous men?"

Question: Is it easy to see the good in others? It's easy to see what's good about some people. Their virtues just seem to shine. But sometimes it's not so easy, and it seems like we have to use a magnifying glass to find something good in a person. Our forefather, Abraham, found himself in such a situation when יהוה told him He wanted to destroy the evil city of Sodom. Although they were pretty bad, and Abraham could have easily kept quiet and went along - he didn't. He searched and searched to try to find some good quality even there, which might persuade יהוה to give them another chance. Like Abraham, when we are willing to seek out the hidden good qualities in others (and ourselves), we not only help to bring more good into the world, but we can help people to change for the better.

Question: How can someone benefit from searching for the good qualities within himself? A lot of times a person can get down on himself and focus on his weaknesses rather than his strengths. This is a time to make a special effort to try to find even one little good thing about himself, then another. Pretty soon he'll start to see his whole mood and outlook become much sunnier. This is a powerful tool to live a happier, more productive life.

Question: Can it be that some people just don't have any good qualities? Everyone has virtues. While it's true that in some people the good qualities may be hard to find, if you search enough eventually you'll discover something good within anyone. Each person is a creation of יהוה, and is made in יהוה's image. That alone gives each individual tremendous value. The more you look for virtues in others, the more you'll naturally like them.

Spiritual Exercise: Thank יהוה for the good qualities that you see within yourself. Ask יהוה to reveal to you more of your good qualities and also the good qualities of those around you.

33 And יהוה went His way, as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham: and Abraham returned to his place.



Genesis 19:1 And there came two angels (*messengers*) to Sodom at evening; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed (*worshiped*) himself with his face toward the ground;

Question: Who were the two angels? This same Hebrew word *Angel* that is used to describe the two men who went to Sodom and Gomorrah is also used to describe the *Angel* who spoke to Moses from the burning bush who also received worship (Gen 3:2).

Question: Why were two angels sent to observe the wickedness of Sodom? Doesn't יהוה know what goes on everywhere? The Torah says that judgment must be established by two or three witnesses.

Question: How do we know that Lot was still righteous? Lot showed that his years with Abraham had given him so much that, although Sodom had made a mark on him, he had remained righteous. Despite the mortal danger of being hospitable to visitors in the cruel environment of Sodom, Lot took the “men” into his home. He risked his safety, if not his life, to defend the angels.

2 and Lot said, Please, my masters, come to your servant's house and stay all night and wash your feet and then rise up early and go on your way. And they said, No, we will stay in the street all night.

Question: Why did the angels say “no” to Lot and “yes” to Abraham? It may be that they refused in order to test Lot, and give him the opportunity to prove that he was deserving of salvation, because he had still retained the moral teachings of Abraham.

3 And Lot kept pressing them; and they came with him and entered his house; and he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread and they ate. 4 But before they went to sleep, the men of the city of Sodom surrounded the house, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

Question: Why did Lot serve the angels unleavened bread? It was Passover.

Question: Did anyone in the city of Sodom protest the evil that the men wanted to do to the angels? From one end of the city to the other, not one of them protested, because there was not even one righteous man among them.

5 And they called to Lot and said to him, Where *are* the men who came into your house tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them. 6 And Lot went outside the door to them and shut the door behind him,

Question: What does it mean that, “**we may know them**”? It means homosexually or to be intimate with a man. “Sodomy” comes from the city of Sodom.



Lot prevents violence against the Angels, (1555 engraving by Heinrich Aldegrever)

7 And he said, Please, brothers, do not *act* so wickedly. **8** I have two daughters who are virgins; please let me bring them out to you and you can do to them what is good in your eyes: only to these men do nothing; because they are guests in my house. **9** And they said, Stand back. And they said, This man came to live with us and already he *is* acting as a judge: now we will deal worse with you than with them. And they pressed hard upon Lot and tried to break the door. **10** But reached out the men אָת־ their hands and pulled אֶת־ Lot into the house אֶת־ and the door, shut. **11** אֶת־ and the men that *were* at the door of the house they struck all with blindness, so that they couldn't find the door.

Question: Who saves Lot? In Gen 19:10 it is אָת that pulls Lot into the house and shuts the door. The fact, that Lot has a אֶת in front of his name indicates he is a covenant child of יְהוָה אֶת.



The Sodomites are smitten with blindness
(illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*)

Question: Did the men of Sodom repent after they were struck with blindness? Though stricken with blindness, they persisted in their evil plan still seeking the door and vainly trying to enter.

Question: Some equate the attitude of 'what's mine is mine - and what's yours is yours' with the wickedness of Sodom. How do you understand this idea? While on the surface, this attitude seems not charitable, but at least fair and practical, but in truth יהוה wants us all to be givers, and deliberately refusing to give of oneself and one's property is an extremely negative attitude.

12 And the two men said to Lot, Do you have anyone else here besides you? Sons-in-law and your sons and your daughters and whomever you have in the city, bring *them* out of this place: **13** For will destroy We אֶתְּ *this* place, because is waxed (*known*) greatly *the* outcry against them *before* אֶתְּ *the* face of יהוה; and יהוה has sent us to destroy it. **14** And Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who married his daughters and said, Get up, get out of this place; for will destroy אֶתְּ יהוה *this* city. But Lot seemed to be joking *to* his sons-in-law.

Question: What does it mean, “**And Lot went out, and spoke to his sons in law**”? Lot had two married daughters living in the city and he went to talk to their husbands. The daughters also had sons.

Question: How did Lot’s sons-in-law react to the news of coming destruction? They laughed and thought it was a joke. Mockery makes serious discussion impossible, because every attempt to prove one’s point is turned aside with a contemptuous joke. “One jest repulses a hundred rebukes.”

15 And when the morning came, then the angels hurried Lot saying, Get up, take אֶתְךָ your wife וְאִתְּךָ and two of your daughters, that are here; or you will be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

Question: Was Lot’s wife a covenant child? Lot’s wife was a covenant child of אֵלֹהִים but she becomes a perfect example that even covenant children can lose their lives if they disobey Elohim.

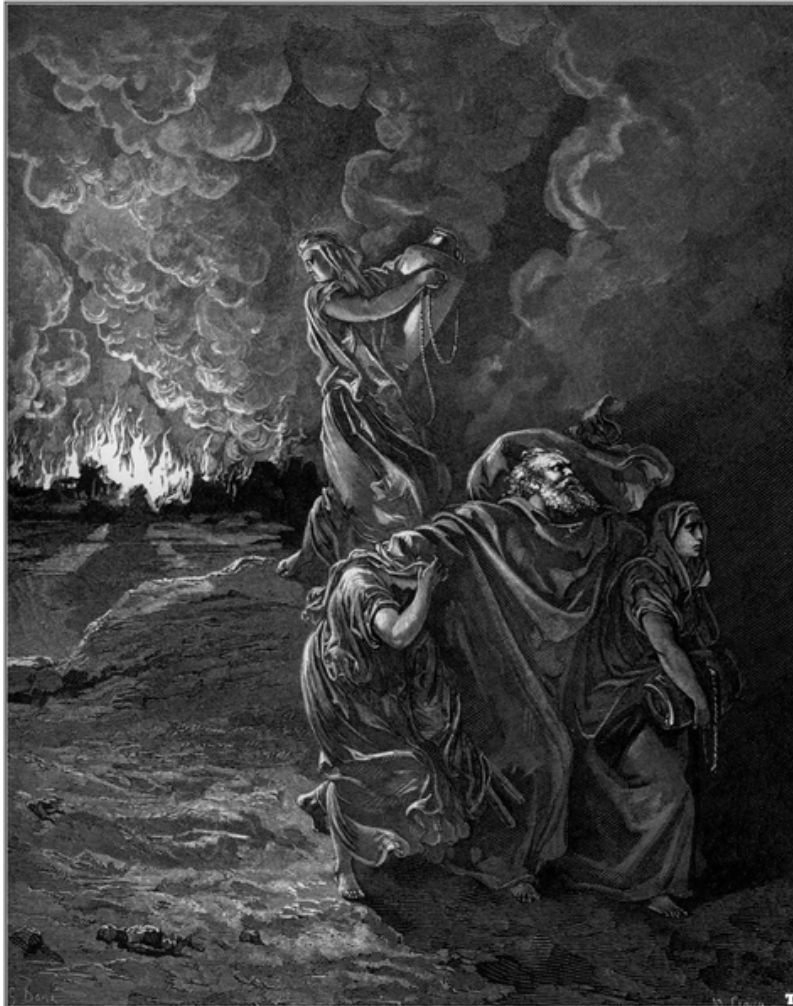
16 And while Lot lingered, the men grabbed his hand and אֶתְיָדָהּ his wife’s hand and the hand of his two daughters; וַיְהִי was being merciful to Lot: and they brought him out and set him outside the city.



Lot and his Daughters Flee Sodom
(1908 illustration by the Providence Lithograph Company)

Question: Why did Lot linger in the city? Lot was trying to save his possessions.

17 And it came to pass when they had brought them outside *of the city* that they said, **Escape for your life; do not look behind you, don't stay in the plain *but* escape to the mountain, otherwise you *will* be consumed.**



Flight of Lot (engraving by Gustave Doré from the 1865 *La Sainte Bible*)

Question: Why did the angel say, “**escape for your life**”? Save your life. Do not worry about your possessions.

Question: Where did the angels tell Lot to go? Flee to Abraham, who dwells on the mountain.

18 And Lot said to them, **Please no, my Adonai: 19** Certainly now your servant has found grace in your sight and you have magnified your mercy, which you have shown to me by saving ^{חַיִּי} my life; but I cannot escape to the mountain, otherwise *some* evil *will* overtake me and I *will* die:

Question: Why did Lot fear to live next to Abraham? Lot said, “When I was among the people of Sodom, יהוה saw my deeds and the deeds of the people of the city, and I appeared righteous and worthy of being saved. But when I shall come alongside a righteous man, Abraham, I shall be considered a wicked man. And so did the woman of Zarephath say to Elijah (I Kings 17: 18): “Have you come to me to cause my sins to be remembered?” Before you came to me, יהוה would see my deeds and the deeds of my people, and I was a righteous woman among them, but since you have come to me, compared to your deeds, I am wicked.

20 **הֲזֹאתַּ This little city is near: let me escape there; is it not a little one? And my soul will live.**

Question: Why did Lot want to go to Zoar? Zoar was recently settled. Therefore, its measure is not yet full. And how recently was it settled? The settlement of Zoar took place after the settlement of Sodom and its companions by one year.

Question: Why did Lot say the city was small? Lot said, “Doesn’t it have few iniquities? Therefore, you can leave it alone. It is a small city with a small population. You do not have to care if you spare it and my soul can survive there.”

21 **And he said to Lot, וַיִּשְׁאַתִּי I agree [with] you concerning this thing that I will not overthrow אֶת־this city of which you have spoken.**

Question: What mercy did the angel give to Lot? Not only would Lot be saved, but יהוה would save the entire city for his sake.

Question: Why was Lot encouraged to flee for his life? Someone who is totally righteous -- an Abraham, for example -- may be saved by miracles even when everything around him is crashing down. Less righteous people may be granted an opportunity to save themselves from impending doom, but once the destruction begins, they will be caught up in the general carnage. Lot could be saved only before the upheaval began, but not from its midst. Furthermore, neither he nor the others in his entourage were entitled to witness the fate of the other Sodomites and still remain unscathed. Thus, when Lot's wife turned around to see the horrors that her fellows were suffering, she, too, died.

Question: What was the purpose of Lot’s survival? Lot deserved to leave Sodom, whether in his own merit or Abraham's -- or because "two precious treasures" would descend from him: Ruth, the ancestress of King David, and Naamah the Ammonitess, who would marry King Solomon; these two righteous descendants of Lot would become the mothers of the Davidic dynasty and the King Messiah.

22 **Hurry escape there; for I cannot do anything until you arrive there. Therefore, the name of the city was called Zoar (little).** **23** **The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.**



Lot Flees with his daughters

24 And יהוה rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire מֵאֵת *from* יהוה out of heaven. **25** And He overthrew אֶת cities אֶת *and* all the plain אֶת *and* all the inhabitants of the cities and that which grew on the ground. **26** But אִשְׁתּוֹ *his wife* looked back and she became a pillar of salt.

Question: How long did יהוה's judgment of Sodom last on the land? The sulfurous fire that destroyed Sodom leaves its mark even today, because the area of Sodom is a desert that is rich in sulfur mines.

Question: Why did Lot's wife look back to Sodom? She longed to go back to Sodom and was not counted worthy of escaping destruction.



A geological formation overlooking the Dead Sea is called 'Lot's Wife', because of the shape and location of the feature.

27 Abraham got up early in the morning to go there to the place where he stood אֶת־ before יהוה .

Question: Why did Abraham get up early to look towards Sodom? יהוה did not tell Abraham what the outcome would be, so he arose in the morning to see what had happened.

28 And Abraham looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the plain and the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.



Abraham Sees Sodom in Flames
(watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

29 And it came to pass, when destroyed Elohim אֶת־ the cities of the plain, remembered Elohim אֶת־ Abraham and sent אֶת־ Lot out of the midst of the destruction, when He overthrew אֶת־ the cities in which Lot lived.

Question: Who destroys the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? In Gen 19:13-15 it is clear that both יהוה and אֵל are in agreement that Sodom and Gomorrah will be destroyed because their sin has come up before both יהוה and אֵל but Gen 19:25 and 19:29 makes it clear that it is יהוה through אֵל that actually destroys the cities. MATS

Question: What does the remembrance of Abraham have to do with Lot? יהוה remembered Abraham's affection for Lot and sent Lot out of the destruction.

2 Peter 2:4 For if יהוה did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; 5 if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; 6 if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)- 9 if this is so, then יהוה knows how to rescue righteous men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. 10 This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; 11 yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of יהוה.

Luke 17:26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. 31 On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. 32 Remember Lot's wife! 33 Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34 I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. 35 Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left. 37 "Where, Yahshua?" they asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

Question: Is there evidence that Sodom and Gomorrah ever existed?



In the Dead Sea area archaeologists discovered a 23-inch thick wall around the city, along with numerous houses and a large temple. Outside the city were huge grave sites where thousands of skeletons were unearthed. This revealed that the city had been well populated during the early Bronze Age, about the time Abraham would have lived. Most intriguing was evidence that a massive fire had destroyed the city. It lay buried under a coating of ash several feet thick. A cemetery one kilometer outside the city contained charred remains of roofs, posts, and bricks turned red from heat. Dr. Bryant Wood, in describing these charred houses, stated that a fire began on the roofs of these buildings. Eventually the burning roof collapsed into the interior and spread inside the building. This was the case in every house they excavated. Such a massive fiery destruction would match the biblical account that the city was destroyed by fire that rained down from heaven.



Sulfur ball



The ground is covered with sulphur balls

SODOM AND GOMORRAH



"All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close.

(1Corinthians 10:11) (NLT) -BibleGateway



"But the day Lot left Sodom,
 fire and sulfur rained down from heaven
 and destroyed them all.
 It will be just like this
 on the day the Son of Man is revealed."
(Luke 17:29-30)(NIV)-BibleGateway

30 And Lot left Zoar and lived in the mountain and his two daughters went with him; because he was afraid to live in Zoar: and he lived in a cave with his two daughters.

Question: Why did Lot leave Zoar? It was near Sodom and he knew judgment was coming soon so he fled the destruction.

31 And the firstborn *daughter* said to the younger, our father *is* old and *there is* no man on the earth to come in to us after the custom of all the earth:

Question: Why did Lot's daughters want to preserve the seed of their father? Lot's daughters were modest, virgin, righteous women whose actions were nobly motivated. Thinking that the rest of the world had been destroyed in the upheaval of Sodom -- and that even Zoar had been spared only while they were there -- they felt that it was their responsibility to save the human race by bearing children, even though the only living male was their own father. The Torah does not label their actions as incestuous because they sincerely thought there was no other way to insure populating the world. Because their intentions were pure, they merited that among their descendants would be Ruth, ancestress of David, and Naamah, queen of Solomon and mother of Rehoboam, his successor and the next link in the Davidic chain (R' Bachya).



Lot and His Daughters (painting circa 1509 by Lucas van Leyden)

32 Come, let us make drunk וְנִשְׁכָּר our father *with* wine and we will lie with him, that we may preserve *the* seed of our father. 33 And they made drunk וְנִשְׁכָּר their father *with* wine that night: and the firstborn went in and lay *with* וַתִּשְׁכַּב her father; and Lot did not know when she laid down or when she got up. 34 And it came to pass on the next day, that the firstborn *daughter* said to the younger, I lay last night *with* וַתִּשְׁכַּב my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go in and lie with him, that we may preserve *the* seed of our Father. 35 And they made drink also: in *the* night the וְנִשְׁכָּר father *with* wine: and the younger rose and lay with him; and he did not know when she laid down or when she got up. 36 So both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. 37 And the firstborn gave birth *to* a son and called his name Moab (*son of my father*): he is the father of the Moabites to this day. 38 And the younger gave birth *to* a son and called his name Benammi (*son of my people*): he is the father of *the* Children of Ammon to this day.

Question: What happened to Lot and his daughters? And after this Lot and his two daughters went away from there, and he dwelt on the other side of the Jordan with his two daughters and their sons, and the sons of Lot grew up, and they went and took themselves wives from the land of Canaan, and they begat children and they were fruitful and multiplied. Jasher 19

Genesis 20:1 And Abraham journeyed from there toward the south country and lived between Kodesh and Shur and lived in Gerar.

Question: Why did Abraham move to another location? When he saw that the cities had been destroyed and that travelers had ceased to pass by, he migrated from there. He also wanted to distance himself from Lot, who had become notorious, because he had been intimate with his daughters. Abraham chose to live in a heavily populated area that could provide him the opportunity to spread his belief in יהוה.



Abraham and King Abimelech

2 And Abraham said about Sarah אִשְׁתּוֹ *his wife*, She is my sister: Abimelech, king of Gerar, took Sarah into his house.

Question: Should any harm come to the righteous if they walk in covenant with יהוה? All through the Tanakh the placement of the אַת (mark) of Messiah in front of people's names makes it clear who they belong to, by covenant and make no mistake אַת children are representatives of אַת יהוה on earth. To harm them is to harm אַת יהוה and to bless them is to bless אַת יהוה Elohim.

Question: Why did Abraham ask Sarah to pretend to be his sister again? Abraham did not expect a repetition of the same experience because Abimelech was a righteous king and Philistia was a more law-abiding country than Egypt.

Question: If Abimelech was righteous, why did he take Sarah into his house? Abimelech planned to marry her. That her beauty was so great at the age of ninety that a king desired her may be because she had become youthful again so that she could become pregnant. Abimelech could have wished to marry into the blessed family of Abraham.

3 But Elohim came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, You are about to die, because the woman who you have taken is another man's wife. 4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Adonai, will you kill a righteous nation?

Question: How did יהוה stop Abimelech from touching Sarah? To prevent Abimelech from forcing Sarah to live with him, he was punished with impotence. Then Elohim came to Abimelech in a dream and said: "I did not let you touch Sarah or I would have to kill you". Abimelech said, "Even if I am righteous will You kill me? Do not destroy me having no reason. I asked all her servants, camel drivers, and donkey drivers. I asked them all, and they said: 'He is her brother.' I did not intend to sin. I am pure of sin, for I did not touch her."

Question: Do you think that Abimelech was righteous in יהוה's eyes? Good intentions do not purify a wrong deed. Its measure is whether it complies with יהוה's will. If it is wrong in יהוה's eyes, then good intentions do not give it merit. Lack of knowledge is itself sinful, for a person has the obligation to seek instruction.

5 Didn't he say to me, she is my sister? And she even said, He is my brother: my heart has been pure and innocent are my hands, I have not done זאת *this*. 6 Elohim said to him in a dream, Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you did זאת *this* for I withheld also אותך *you* from sinning against Me: therefore, I did not let you touch her. 7 Now give back the man *his* אִשְׁתּוֹ *wife*; because he is a prophet and he will pray for you so you will live: and if you do not give her back, then you will die, אַתְּ *you* and all who belong to you.

Question: Was Abimelech concerned about giving Sarah back to Abraham? How would Abraham know that Abimelech had not touched Sarah? יהוה told Abimelech, "Abraham is a prophet and he knows that you did not touch her; therefore, he will pray for you."

8 Therefore, Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told **אֵת** all these things to them: and the men were exceedingly afraid. 9 Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, What have you done to us and how have **חָטָאתִי** *I sinned* against you that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done things to me that ought not to be done.



Abimelech Rebukes Abraham
(17th Century illustration by Wenceslas Hollar)

10 Abimelech said to Abraham, Whatever could have caused you *to* have done **אֵת** *a thing such as* this? 11 Abraham said, Because **אָמַרְתִּי** *I said* that the **פְּרוֹחַ** *fear of Elohim was* not in this place: and they will kill me for my wife's sake. 12 *She is* my sister; *she is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. 13 When Elohim caused **אֵתִי** *me* to wander from my father's house, I said to her, Show me this kindness. Every place we go please say about me, he *is* my brother. 14 Abimelech took sheep, oxen, men servants and female servants and gave *them* to Abraham and gave him **אֵת** Sarah **אִשְׁתּוֹ** *his wife*.

Question: Why did Abimelech give Abraham a gift? Abimelech knew that he had to appease both Abraham and Sarah, because he would not be healed unless Abraham prayed for him, and only Sarah could forgive him for the harm and humiliation he had caused her, so he gave them gifts, humbled himself, and assured them that they could feel secure in his land.

15 Abimelech said, My land *is* before you: live wherever it pleases you to live. 16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given your brother a thousand *pieces of silver*: behold, he *is* to you a covering of the eyes, unto all that *are* **אִתְּךָ** *with you* **וְאֵת** *and with all other*: thus she was reproved.

Question: How did others know that Abimelech had not touched Sarah? Abimelech [said] in her honor in order to appease her, “Behold I have bestowed upon you this honor; I have given money to your brother, about whom you said, He is my brother. Your servants will cover their eyes, so that they will not degrade you, for had I returned you empty-handed, they could say, “After he violated her, he returned her.” Now that I had to spend much money and to appease you, they will know that against my will I returned you, and through a miracle.

17 So Abraham prayed to Elohim: and healed Elohim אֶת־ Abimelech וְאֶת־ *and* אִשְׁתּוֹ *his wife* and his female servants; and they gave birth to children. 18 Because יְהוָה had closed up all the wombs in the house of Abimelech on account of Sarah, Abraham’s אִשְׁתּוֹ *wife*.

Question: Why are these sections of the Torah linked next to each other? This teaches that "If someone prays for mercy on behalf of another when he himself needs that very same thing, he is answered first" (Bava Kamma 92a). For in the previous section it is said: Abraham prayed for Abimelech...and they were healed...and here it says and יְהוָה had already remembered Sarah -- implying that יְהוָה had filled Sarah's need before He healed Abimelech (Rashi). The key to conception is in יְהוָה's hand. He withheld conceiving a child from Abimelech and his servants and gave it to Sarah, as His wisdom dictated (R' Bachya).

Genesis 21:1 יְהוָה visited אֶת־ Sarah as he had said and וַיְהוֶה *did* to Sarah as He had spoken. 2 Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time at which Elohim had spoken to אֹתוֹ *him*.

Question: On what day did Sarah conceive? Rosh Hashanah “Head of the year”

Question: What does “a son in his old age” mean? This means that Isaac’s facial features were like Abraham. Isaac was born after nine months, so that it should not be said that Isaac was conceived in Abimelech’s household.

3 And called Abraham אֶת־ *the* name of his son, Isaac, who was born to him by Sarah. 4 And circumcised Abraham אֶת־ Isaac, his son, when he was eight days old as Elohim had commanded אֹתוֹ *him*. 5 Abraham was 100 years old when was born to him אֶת־ Isaac his son. 6 Sarah said, Elohim has made me laugh, so all that hear about me will laugh with me. 7 She said, Who would have said to Abraham *that* Sarah would have nursed children because I have bore *him* a son in his old age?

Question: What does the name Isaac mean? Laughter.

Question: What showed the unbelievers that Sarah really did birth a child in her old age? Some of the people were saying, “Sarah did not give birth, but brought in a foundling from the street” until they saw Sarah nursing the child.

8 The child grew and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast *the same day that he* weaned אֶת־ Isaac.

Question: Why was this called a “great feast”? Shem and Eber and all the great people of the land, and Abimelech king of the Philistines, and his servants, and Phichol, the captain of his host, came to eat and drink and rejoice at the feast which Abraham made upon the day of his son Isaac's being weaned. Also Terah, the father of Abraham, and Nahor his brother, came from Haran, they and all belonging to them, for they greatly rejoiced on hearing that a son had been born to Sarah. Terah and Nahor rejoiced with Abraham, and they remained with him many days in the land of the Philistines. Jasher 21

9 And saw Sarah תֵּן the son (Ishmael) of Hagar the Egyptian who she had bore to Abraham, mocking Isaac.

Question: Is there ever a time to use put-down humor to call others names? Everything in יהוה's world has its purpose, and this does too. For instance, the Torah teaches that it is a good thing to make fun of idolatry, to help people realize how pointless it is. But since this is something we rarely encounter, better we should focus on how to lift people up, and not put them down.

Question: Is "I'm only joking" ever a valid excuse to insult others? More pain probably gets dished out behind those three words than almost any others. An insult is an insult, and wrapping it within a joke doesn't make it hurt any less than wrapping a poison pill in a sugar coating.

Question: Why was Sarah concerned about Ishmael mocking Isaac? When Isaac was 5 years old, Ishmael came to Isaac and seated himself opposite to him, and he took the bow and drew it and put the arrow in it, and intended to slay Isaac. Sarah saw the act which Ishmael desired to do to her son Isaac, and it grieved her exceedingly on account of her son, and she sent for Abraham, and said to him, “Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for her son shall not be heir with my son, for thus did he seek to do unto him this day.” Jasher 21

10 Therefore, she said to Abraham, Throw out הַזֹּאת this bondwoman וְאֶת־ and her son, because the son of הַזֹּאת this bondwoman will not be heir with my son, Isaac! 11 Abraham became very distressed about this matter of his son.

Question: Why did יהוה command Abraham to send away Ishmael? He was a menace to the spiritual health -- and perhaps the very life -- of Isaac. To signify Ishmael's gross nature, the Torah describes him as the son of Hagar, the Egyptian. Despite her many years in the home of Abraham and Sarah, Hagar remained an Egyptian princess, and Ishmael gravitated to her influence rather than Abraham's. That Abraham found it repugnant to send Ishmael away is clear from the narrative, but he was strong enough to do whatever he was commanded. As the Patriarch of Israel, his primary responsibility was to subordinate his feelings of love to the dictates of the future.

12 Elohim said to Abraham, Don't let this distress you about the boy and אֲמִיתְךָ your maidservant. All that Sarah said to you, listen to her voice, because in Isaac will your seed be named.

Question: Why did יהוה say for Abraham to obey Sarah's voice? יהוה had revealed to Sarah what evils would befall Isaac if Ishmael would remain with them.

13 And also *from* הַחַיִּים *the* son of the bondwoman I will make a nation, because he *is* your seed also.
 14 Abraham rose up early in the morning and took bread and a bottle of water and gave *it* to Hagar, putting *it* on her shoulder הַחַיִּים *and* the child and sent her away: and she left and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.



Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael into the Desert
 (woodcut by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld from the 1860 *Bible in Pictures*)

Question: Why didn't Abraham give Hagar silver and gold, but only water and bread? Abraham was angry that Ishmael had fallen into evil ways. Abraham did give them enough water for the trip, but they must have gotten lost in the desert due to the distress of Hagar and Ishmael being forced from their home.

15 After the water was gone in the bottle, she put הַחַיִּים *the* child under one of the shrubs.



Hagar and Ishmael by Virginie Demont-Breton

16 And she went about a bowshots distance from him and sat down and looked away from him, because she said, Do not let me see the death of the child. So she sat there and lifted up וַתִּשָּׂא her voice and wept.

Question: Why was Hagar's behavior disgraceful? Her behavior was disgraceful and indicative of her flawed character. Rather than comfort her child in his dying moments, she thought only of herself and the discomfort she would feel in the presence of his agony. Therefore, יְהוָה heard his cry, not hers. Her loud weeping was selfish and therefore valueless (R' Hirsch).



The Angel appears to Hagar and Ishmael 1652-3, Guercino

17 And heard Elohim ^{וַיִּשְׁמַע} *the* voice of the boy; and the Angel of Elohim called Hagar from heaven and said to her, What troubles you Hagar? Do not be afraid, because Elohim has heard the voice of the boy.

Question: Why did Elohim hear the lad's voice and not Hagar's voice in the desert? The lad was from the seed of Abraham and was promised to become a great nation.

18 Arise, pick up ^{וַיִּקַּח} *the* boy and hold him in *your* ^{וּבְיָמֶיךָ} *hand*; because I will make him a great nation. 19 And opened Elohim ^{וַיִּפְתַּח} *her* eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled ^{וַיִּמְלֵא} *the* bottle *with* water and gave drink *to* ^{וַיִּשְׁתְּ} *the* boy.

Question: Did יהוה perform a miracle for Hagar? The Torah does not say that a well was created miraculously; the verse implies that her eyes were opened and she saw a well that had been there all along. This teaches that יהוה always provides what we need, but we must be ready to open our eyes and see it (Midrash).

20 And was Elohim *with* אֱלֹהִים the boy; and he grew and lived in the wilderness and became an archer. 21 And he lived in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother found him a wife from the land of Egypt.

Question: Why did Hagar choose to live in Egypt? Hagar was still an Egyptian Princess. She went back to the place of her birth. Hagar took a wife for her son from Egypt, and her name was Meribah, and she bare four sons and two daughters, and Ishmael and his mother and his wife and children afterward went and returned to the wilderness and lived in tents. יהוה gave Ishmael flocks and herds and tents on account of Abraham his father, and the man increased in cattle. Jasher 21

22 And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the chief captain of his host, spoke to Abraham saying, Elohim *is* with you in all that אֱלֹהִים *you* do:

Question: Why did Abimelech say to Abraham, “**Elohim is with you in all that you do**”? Abimelech saw that Abraham had come out of the region of Sodom unscathed, and that he had fought with the kings and they fell into his hand, and that his wife was remembered with a child in his old age.



Abraham and Abimelech make a peace treaty

23 Now swear to me here by Elohim *that* you will not deal falsely with me, or with my son, or with my grandson: *but* according to the kindness that I have treated you, you will do to me and to the land which you have lived *as a foreigner*.

Question: Did the descendants of King Abimelech keep this peace agreement? The Philistines observed this oath until the days of Samson, when they began to attack Israel for the first time (Sotah 10a).

24 And Abraham said, I will swear. **25** And reproved (*argued*) Abraham אָרַג to Abimelech about a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. **26** And Abimelech said, I do not know who has done *this* אָרַג thing. Yet אָרַג you did not tell me about it and this is the first I have heard *of it* today. **27** Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave *them* to Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. **28** And put Abraham אָרַג seven ewe (*female*) lambs of the flock by themselves. **29** Abimelech said to Abraham, *what is the meaning of* these seven ewe lambs which you have separated from the others? **30** And he (*Abraham*) said, For *these* אָרַג seven ewe lambs you are to accept from me as a witness that I have dug אָרַג this אָרַג well.

Question: Why did Abraham give Abimelech the seven ewe lambs? This gift was a witness to everyone that Abraham did dig the well.

31 Therefore, Abraham called that place Beer-sheba (*well of seven*), because there they swore to each other. **32** So they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: then Abimelech and Phichol, the chief captain of his host, got up and they returned to the land of the Philistines. **33** Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba and he called there on the name of אָרַג, the everlasting Elohim. **34** Abraham lived in the Philistines land many days.

Question: Why did Abraham plant a grove in Beer-sheba? Abraham planted a large grove in Beersheba, and he made to it four gates facing the four sides of the earth (north, south, east, west), and he planted a vineyard in it, so that if a traveler came to Abraham he entered any gate which was in his road, and remained there and ate and drank and satisfied himself and then departed. For the house of Abraham was always open to the sons of men that passed and passed by again, who came daily to eat and drink in the house of Abraham. And any man who had hunger and came to Abraham's house, Abraham would give him bread that he might eat and drink and be satisfied, and any one that came naked to his house he would clothe with garments as he might choose, and give him silver and gold and make known to him אָרַג who had created him in the earth; this did Abraham all his life.

Question: Why does it say “**many days**”? This means Abraham lived more days in the land of the Philistines than those in Hebron. In Hebron he spent twenty-five years, and here he spent twenty-six years.

Genesis 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that Elohim did test אָרַג Abraham and said to him, Abraham: and Abraham said, Here I am.

Question: Why did יהוה test Abraham? A potter does not examine defective vessels, because he cannot give them a single blow without breaking them. What then does he examine? Only the sound vessels, for he will not break them even with many blows. יהוה does not test the wicked but only the righteous.

Question: Why does the Torah use the word “test”? The other trial were carried to completion. Abraham actually left his homeland, sent away Ishmael, and so on -- but this one remained nothing more than a test, because יהוה did not permit Abraham to slaughter Isaac (Abarbanel).

Question: Some have said 'Life is nothing but tests.' What do you think this means? The very reason for our existence is to serve יהוה no matter how difficult the circumstances. יהוה gave us life and put us in the world to grow spiritually. This growth comes when we freely choose to do, say and even think the right thing. Therefore, we are constantly placed in situations where we can make those choices.

Question: Did יהוה ask Abraham to give up what he loved most for Him? Will you be asked to give up what you value most? Abraham gave up his son that he loved for יהוה and Isaac was given back to him. You may have to give up what you value most for יהוה, and then it will be given back to you.

Question: What does testing produce? **James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

Question: What were Abraham's 10 Trials?

1. Abraham hid underground for 13 years from King Nimrod, who wanted to kill him.
2. Nimrod flung Abraham into a burning furnace.
3. Abraham was commanded to leave this family and homeland
4. Almost as soon as he arrived in Canaan, he was forced to leave to escape a famine.
5. Pharaoh's officials kidnapped Sarah.
6. The kings captured Lot, and Abraham was forced to go to war to rescue him
7. His marriage to Hagar after having despaired that Sarah would never give birth.
8. At an advanced age, he was commanded to circumcise himself and his son.
9. He was commanded to drive away Ishmael and Hagar.
10. He was commanded to sacrifice Isaac.

2 And He (Elohim) said, Take now, אֶתְּךָ your son, אֶתְּךָ your only son whom אָהַבְתָּּ you love אֶתְּךָ Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah (chosen by Yah); and offer Isaac there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you.

Question: Was this a test for Isaac also? Since Abraham was 137 and Isaac was 37, there was no way Abraham could force Isaac to go. Rather, he was to take him by persuasion to do the will of יהוה (Zohar).

Question: Where did Abraham take Isaac to be sacrificed? Jerusalem, on the place where His Temple would be built, and so in (II) Chronicles (3:1): “**to build the House of Elohim in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah**”.

Question: Why does יהוה not tell Abraham which mountain to go to in the beginning? יהוה makes the righteous wonder (wait), and only afterwards discloses to them His intentions, and all this is in order to increase their reward.

Question: What did Abraham tell Sarah about his trip with Isaac? Abraham told Sarah, “My son Isaac is grown up and he has not for some time studied the service of יהוה, now tomorrow I will go and bring him to Shem, and Eber his son, and there he will learn the ways of יהוה. Sarah agreed but she greatly loved Isaac. Sarah wept bitterly the whole night on account of Isaac. In the morning Sarah selected a very fine and beautiful garment from those garments which she had in the house, which Abimelech had given to her. She dressed Isaac and put a turban upon his head, and she enclosed a precious stone in the top of the turban, and she gave them provision for the road. Sarah went out with them, and she accompanied them upon the road to see them off, and they said to her, “Return to the tent”. When Sarah heard the words of her son Isaac she wept bitterly, and Abraham her husband wept with her, and their son wept with them a great weeping; also those who went with them wept greatly. Sarah caught hold of her son Isaac, and she held him in her arms, and she embraced him and continued to weep with him, and Sarah said, “Who knows if after this day I shall ever see thee again?”

3 Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled את his donkey and took את two of his young men with him and Isaac his son and cut the wood for the burnt (sin) offering and rose up and went to the place about which Elohim had told him.

Question: How quickly did Abraham obey יהוה's command? Abraham hastened to perform the commandment, because he rose up early in the morning.

4 Then on the third day lifted up Abraham את his eyes and saw את the place afar off.

Question: Why did יהוה delay from showing the mountain to Abraham immediately? יהוה tested his faith to believe in Him.

5 Abraham said to his young men, Stay here with the donkey; and I and the boy will go over there and worship and come back to you again,

Question: Why did Abraham say that they both would return? Abraham prophesied that they would both return. Abraham knew that יהוה would fulfill his promise through Isaac.

6 And took Abraham את the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand את the fire and a knife; and both of them went together.



Isaac carries the wood for his sacrifice

7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, My father: and Abraham said, Yes, my son. And Isaac said I see the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering? **8** Abraham said, My son, Elohim will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so both of them went together. (*Prophecy Fulfilled-Gen. 22:8 The Lamb of Elohim promised-John 1:2*).

Question: When did Isaac know that he was to become the sacrifice? Until now Isaac did not know the true purpose of the journey, but as they walked toward the mountain with no animal in sight, he suspected the nature of the test, and he asked this probing question. Abraham answered delicately, "יהוה will seek out for Himself the lamb, but if there is no lamb, then you, my son, will be the offering". Then Isaac understood (Rashi). The much younger Isaac could have resisted or fled easily, but he walked on together with Abraham.

Question: What was Abraham prophesying when he said that “**Elohim will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering**”? Elohim provided his own son Yahshua as the lamb that was sacrificed and יהוה spared Isaac.

Question: What is the symbol of Isaac carrying the wood for his own sacrifice? This was symbolic of Yahshua carrying the wooden stake for his sacrifice.

9 They came to the place, which Elohim had told him about; and built there Abraham אָתָּה an altar and laid in order אָתָּה the wood and bound אָתָּה Isaac his son and laid אֹתוֹ *him* on the altar upon the wood.



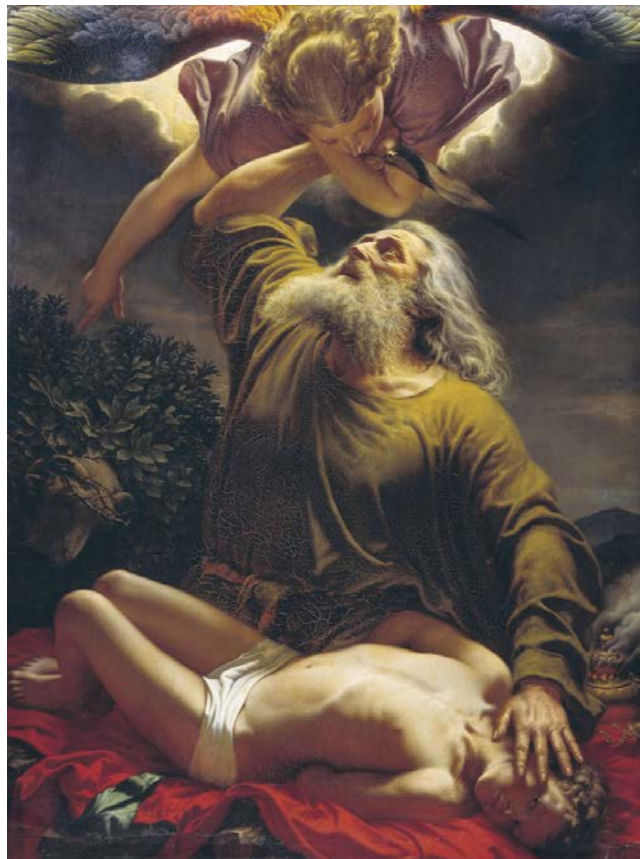
The Angel Hinders the Offering of Isaac (1635 painting by Rembrandt)

Question: Why did Abraham bound Isaac? Can one bind a man thirty-seven years old without his consent? But when Abraham came to slaughter his son Isaac, Isaac said to him: "Father, I am a young man and I am afraid that my body may tremble through fear of the knife and I will grieve you, whereby the slaughter may be rendered unfit and this will not count as a real sacrifice; therefore bind me very firmly".

10 And stretched out Abraham אָתָּה his hand and took אָתָּה the knife to kill אָתָּה his son. 11 And the Angel of יהוה called to him out of heavens and said, Abraham, Abraham: and Abraham said, Here I am.



The Sacrifice of Isaac (painting circa 1590–1610 by Caravaggio)



The Angel stops Abraham

Question: Why did Elohim call Abraham's name twice? Both the Father and the Son called out his name.

12 And He (the Angel) said, Do not lay your hand upon the boy, or do anything to him: because now I know that you fear Elohim, seeing אַתָּה אַתָּה you have not withheld אַתָּה your son, אַתָּה your only son, from Me.

Question: What did Elohim mean by “now I know that you fear Elohim”? From now on, I have a response to Satan and the nations who wonder what My Love towards you is. Now I have a reason (an opening of the mouth), for they see “that you fear Me.”

13 And lifted up Abraham אַתָּה his eyes and looked and saw behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham took אַתָּה the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. 14 Abraham called the name of that place *Yahovah-jireh* (יהוה ירהוה will provide): as it is said to this day, on the mountain יהוה is seen.



Question: What does it mean, “**on the mountain יהוה is seen**”? יהוה will choose and see for Himself this place, to cause His Divine Presence to rest therein and for offering sacrifices here. This is the future site of the Temple in Jerusalem.

15 The angel of יהוה called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, **16** And said, I have sworn by myself, says יהוה, since you have done *this* אַתָּה selfsame matter and have not withheld אַתָּה your son, אַתָּה your only son: **17** That I will bless you and I will multiply אַתָּה your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and will possess your seed אַתָּה the gate (*cities*) of his enemies; **18** And in your seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Gen. 22:18 As Isaac's seed, will bless all nations-Gal. 3:16.*

James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? **15** Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. **16** If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? **17** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. **18** But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds". Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. **19** You believe that there is one יהוה. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder. **20** You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? **21** Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? **22** You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. **23** And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "*Abraham believed יהוה, and it was credited to him as righteousness*", and he was called יהוה's friend. **24** You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

Spiritual Exercise: Is your life filled with good deeds? Do you think of others instead of yourself? This week try to see how many good deeds you can do for others. Only by giving to others can you build up for yourself treasures in heaven.

19 So Abraham returned to his young men and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.



Beer-sheba, Turkey

20 And it came to pass after these things that it was told *to* Abraham, Milcah has also born children to your brother Nahor,

Question: Why did Abraham find out about his brother Nahor having children? When he returned from Mount Moriah, Abraham was thinking and saying, “Had my son been slaughtered, he would have died without children. I should have married him to a woman of the daughters of Aner, Eshkol, or Mamre. יהוה announced to him that Rebekah, his mate, had been born, and that is the meaning of “**after these things**”.

Discuss: Is יהוה capable of telling the father who the mate of his son should be? Must the father be listening to יהוה to hear this good news?

21 וְאֶת־חֻזַּי חֻזַּי his firstborn וְאֶת־בֻּזְיָאֵל and Buz his brother וְאֶת־קִמְעֵל and Kemuel, the father of Aram, **22** וְאֶת־חֶשֶׁד and Chesed וְאֶת־חָזוֹ and Hazo וְאֶת־פִּלְדַּשׁ and Pildash וְאֶת־יִדְלָפִי and Jidlaph וְאֶת־בְּתוּעַל and Bethuel. **23** And Bethuel became the father of וְאֶת־רִבְקָה Rebekah: these eight sons Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. **24** And Nahor’s concubine, whose name was Reumah and bore also her וְאֶת־טִבַּחְתִּי and Tebah וְאֶת־גַּחַם and Gaham וְאֶת־תַּחַשׁ and Thahash וְאֶת־מַאֲכָה and Maachah.

Question: Who was Isaac’s future wife? Rebekah, born to Behuel, son of Nahor, Abraham’s brother.



Do You Know??

1. יהוה appeared to Abraham after he was ____ so He could heal him.
2. ____ angels came to visit Abraham. (how many?)
3. **Is anything too ____ for יהוה to do?**
4. Abraham asked to spare Sodom if ____ righteous men were found there. (how many?)
5. ____ angels were sent to Sodom to destroy it. (how many?)
6. The angels struck the men of Sodom with ____ so Lot could be pulled inside his house.
7. Lot and his ____ daughters fled to Zoar. (how many?)
8. Lot's wife turned into a pillar of ____.
9. יהוה rained down ____ and ____ from heaven on Sodom.
10. יהוה warned King Abimelech in a ____ about Sarah.
11. Abraham was ____ years old when Isaac was born.
12. Isaac means ____.
13. When ____ mocked Isaac, he was sent away. (who?)
14. Ishmael and Hagar went to ____ to live. (where?)
15. Abraham made a peace treaty with King ____.
16. יהוה asked Abraham to sacrifice ____ on the altar.
17. Instead of sacrificing Isaac, the angel told Abraham to sacrifice a ____
18. Abraham took Isaac to Mt. ____ to be sacrificed.

Answers:

1. Circumcised
2. Three
3. hard
4. ten
5. Two
6. blindness
7. two
8. salt
9. fire and brimstone (sulfur)
10. dream
11. 100
12. laughter
13. Ishmael
14. Egypt
15. Abimelech
16. Isaac
17. ram
18. Moriah (future site of the Temple)

Haftorah

2 Kings 4:1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets to Elisha, saying your servant my husband is dead; and you know that your servant did fear ייהוה אלהים: and the creditor has come to take ארבעת two of my sons to him to be bondmen.

2 And Elisha said to her, what will I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house? And she said your maidservant has not anything in the house, except a pot of oil.

3 Then he said go, borrow vessels abroad from all your neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

4 And when you have come in, you will shut the door after you and your sons and will pour out into all those vessels and you will set aside that which is full.

5 So she went from him and shut the door after her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, bring me a vessel. And he said to her, there are no more vessels. And the oil stayed.

7 Then she came and told the man of Elohim. And he said, "go, sell ארבעת the oil and pay ארבעת your debt and you and your live children own the rest.

8 And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed by Shunem, where there was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat bread.

9 And she said to her husband, see now, I perceive that this is a holy man of Elohim, which passes by us continually.

10 Let us make a little chamber, please, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed and a table and a stool and a menorah: and it will be, when he comes to us that he will turn in there.

11 And it fell on a day, that he came there and he turned into the chamber and lay there.

12 And he said to Gehazi his servant, call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.

13 And he said to him, say now to her, see, you have been careful for us with all this care; what is to be finished for you? Would you be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, "I live among my own people".

14 And he said what then is to be finished for her? And Gehazi answered, verily she has no child and her husband is old.

15 And he said call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

16 And he said about this season, according to the time of life, you will embrace a son. And she said no, my adon, you man of Elohim, do not lie to your maidservant.

17 And the woman conceived and gave birth to a son at that season that Elisha had said to her, according to the time of life.

18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

19 And he said to his father, "my head, my head". And he said to a boy, carry him to his mother.

20 And when he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon and then died.

21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of Elohim and shut the door upon him and went out.

22 And she called to her husband and said send me, Please, one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of Elohim and come again.

23 And he said why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon, nor Sabbath. And she said it will be well.

24 Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant, "drive and go forward; hurry, ride me fast, except I tell you not to".

25 So she went and came to the man of Elohim to Mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of Elohim saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, see over there is that Shunammite:

26 Run now, Please, to meet her and say to her, is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, it is well.

27 And when she came to the man of Elohim to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of Elohim said let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and יהוה has hid it from me and has not told me.

28 Then she said did I desire a son of my adon? Did I not say do not deceive me?

29 Then he said to Gehazi, gird up your loins and take my staff in your hand and go your way: if you meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute you, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

30 And the mother of the child said as יהוה lives and as your soul lives, I will not leave you. And he arose and followed her.

31 And Gehazi passed on before them and laid אָתָּה the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Therefore he went again to meet him and told him, saying the child is not awaked.

32 And when Elisha was come into the house, see, the child was dead and lay upon his bed.

33 He went in therefore and shut the door upon them both and prayed to יהוה.

34 And he went up and lay upon the child and put his mouth upon his mouth and his eyes upon his eyes and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child became warm.

35 Then he returned and walked in the house to and fro; and went up and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times and opened the child אָתָּה his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi and said call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in to him, he said take up your son.

37 Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground and took up אָתָּה her son and went out.

Brit Chadasha

Galatians 4:21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? **22** For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. **23** His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. **24** These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. **25** Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. **26** But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. **27** For it is written:

*"Be glad, O barren woman,
who bears no children;
break forth and cry aloud,
you who have no labor pains;
because more are the children of the desolate woman
than of her who has a husband."*

28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. **29** At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. **30** But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." **31** Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Question: Did Abraham ever visit Ishmael? Abraham went to the wilderness, and he reached the tent of Ishmael about noon, and he asked for Ishmael, and he found the wife of Ishmael sitting in the tent with her children, and Ishmael and his mother were not with them. Abraham asked the wife of Ishmael, saying, "Where has Ishmael gone?" and she said, "He has gone to the field to hunt," and Abraham was still mounted upon the camel, for he would not get off to the ground as he had sworn to his wife Sarah that he would not get off from the camel. Abraham said to Ishmael's wife, "My daughter, give me a little water that I may drink, for I am fatigued from the journey." Ishmael's wife answered and said to Abraham, "We have neither water nor bread", and she continued sitting in the tent and did not notice Abraham, neither did she ask him who he was. But she was beating her children in the tent, and she was cursing them, and she also cursed her husband Ishmael and Abraham heard the words of Ishmael's wife to her children, and he was very angry and displeased. Abraham called to the woman to come out to him from the tent, and the woman came and stood opposite to Abraham, for Abraham was still mounted upon the camel. Abraham said to Ishmael's wife, "When your husband Ishmael returns home say these words to him, A very old man from the land of the Philistines came to see you, and thus was his appearance and figure; I did not ask him who he was, but he said, "When Ishmael returns tell him that this man said, 'When you come home put away this nail of the tent which you have placed here, and place another nail in its place.'" Abraham finished his instructions to the woman, and he went on the camel homeward. After that Ishmael came from the chase he and his mother, and returned to the tent, and his wife told him what happened. Ishmael heard the words of his wife, and he knew that it was his father, and that his wife did not honor him.

Ishmael understood his father's words that he had spoken to his wife, and Ishmael listened to the voice of his father, and Ishmael sent the woman away. Ishmael afterward went to the land of Canaan, and he took another wife and he brought her to his tent to the place where he then dwelt. At the end of three years Abraham said, "I will go again and see Ishmael my son, for I have not seen him for a long time". He rode upon his camel and went to the wilderness, and he reached the tent of Ishmael about noon. He asked about Ishmael, and his wife came out of the tent and she said, "He is not here my lord, for he has gone to hunt in the fields, and to feed the camels," and the woman said to Abraham, "Come in my lord into the tent, and eat a morsel of bread, you must be wearied on account of the journey." Abraham said to her, "I will not stop for I am in haste to continue my journey, but give me a little water to drink, because I am thirsty"; and the woman hurried and ran into the tent and she brought out water and bread to Abraham, which she placed before him and she urged him to eat, and he ate and drank and his heart was comforted and he blessed his son Ishmael. After he finished his meal and he blessed יהוה, he said to Ishmael's wife, "When Ishmael comes home say these words to him, 'A very old man from the land of the Philistines came to see you, and you were not here; and I brought him out bread and water and he ate and drank and his heart was comforted. He spoke these words to me: 'When Ishmael returns home, say unto him, The nail of the tent which you have is very good, do not put it away from the tent.'" His wife told him what happened when he arrived home. Ishmael knew that it was his father, and that his wife had honored him, and יהוה blessed Ishmael. Ishmael then rose up and took his wife and his children and his cattle and all belonging to him, and he journeyed from there and he went to his father in the land of the Philistines. And Ishmael and his children dwelt with Abraham many days in that land, and Abraham dwelt in the land of the Philistines a long time. Jasher 21

Question: What should we do when we meet people who are different from us? When we meet people who are different than us, we may feel that they are not as good as us. But this is not the Torah way. In this week's portion, our forefather, Abraham, who was a wealthy, respected prince, went out of his way to open his home and show great respect to simple desert wanderers. We can learn from his example not to look down on anyone and to treat everyone with respect, even if they are not like us.

ON THE REBOUND

Alex walked out of the lunchroom munching down a granola bar instead of his usual donut. He wanted to make sure to get as much energy as possible for the basketball tryouts that afternoon. There was going to be a new coach this year and a lot of the guys on last year's team graduated, so he felt he really had a chance to make the team. He took his last bite, crumpled up the wrapper and tossed it toward the wastebasket at the end of the lunchroom, missing by a mile. Oh well, as long as I shoot hoops better than this later on, I'm okay, he laughed to himself and walked on. "Hey, pick it up," he heard a gruff voice call behind him. He turned around to see a middle-aged man in coveralls. Just one of the janitors, Alex thought, as he shrugged and kept walking. "What kind of a way is that to act? You made a mess, now you have to pick it up," the man insisted, this time more loudly. Now Alex was starting to get ticked off. Who was this brainless janitor to tell him what to do? "Sorry, man," he said. "That's your job, not mine. If you don't feel like doing it - too bad!" and with that, Alex dashed out to the schoolyard before the janitor could answer back, feeling cool for having put the guy in his place. The rest of the school day went fast and Alex nearly flew to the gym after school to get to tryouts. He was one of the first guys there and when he walked into the gym, the team trainer was setting things up. "Hi. Here for tryouts?" he asked. "Coach is in the equipment room. Go see him to sign up and then come back out and sit in the bleachers until it's time to start. Good luck!" he smiled.

Alex made sure to tuck in his shirt and puff out his chest as he walked in to make a good first impression on the new coach. He nervously knocked on the equipment room door. "Yeah, come in," called a voice which sounded familiar to Alex, though he didn't know why. He pushed open the door and stood eye-to-eye with the janitor he had put down in the lunchroom! But why was he wearing a whistle around his neck and a baseball cap on his head? Because, Alex realized to his horror, he really wasn't a janitor - he was the new coach!!! "You again," the man said sharply. "You came back to tell me more about my job?" Alex, shaking, could hardly open his mouth. Finally he muttered, "I...I'm really sorry, coach. I d...didn't know who you were. I thought you were a j...janitor." "And if I had been- so what? Does that give you an excuse to open up a wise mouth to any adult - to any human being? If you're here to try out, forget it." "But, coach," Alex said, trying desperately to hold his ground. "I said I'm sorry. C...can't you at least wait and see how I play ball?" The man shook his head. "I don't have to. One of the most important things in being part of a team is to have respect for everyone - whether you feel they're better than you or you're better than them. You already showed me, by the way you didn't care, that someone you considered below you would have to clean up your mess - that's a lesson you have to learn. Come back next semester if you learn it and then we'll talk, but until then, take a walk." Walk, Alex did - with his head hanging so low that if it wasn't attached to his neck it would be rolling on the ground. Once outside he pulled out the granola bar he'd saved for after tryouts. No reason not to eat it now. He tossed the wrapper on the pavement. Then, thinking about the coach's words - bent down, picked it up and tossed it in the bin, and scored a bigger point than if he'd shot a game-winning basket.

Question: What life lesson do you think someone could learn from this story? It's easy to look down on people and judge them not worthy of respect, but the Torah way is to treat everyone respectfully.

Question: Do you think the coach should have just judged Alex on how well he played ball and not how he treated people? Why or why not? A person has many parts. While it's true that someone with a lot of athletic talent may have a certain advantage, the fact that Alex hadn't learned to have a basic respect for all people would make it hard for him to succeed on the team - or in life.

Question: Do you think one person can be more important than someone else? In one sense, a person can become important based on his wisdom, talent, wealth, etc. However, on a deeper level, each and every human being has been created by Elohim in His image and therefore is of equal, infinite importance, no matter who he may or may not be.

Question: Should one respect a person who does destructive or even terrible things? In such a case, we have to separate in our minds the person's actions and his true self. His actions can be totally unworthy of respect and can even justify hatred. However, at the same time we must never lose sight of each individual's Righteous essence and maintain a respect of that as a way of respecting Elohim.

Spiritual Exercise: Stand up for what you think is right this week even if you go against friends or the majority.

Resources: “Weekly Torah Portion” from www.aish.com

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures C-MATS www.AlephTavScriptures.com

The Book of Jashar- Joshua 10:13 **So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar.**