

Genesis 18

- I. The tremendous news (Genesis 18:1-15)
 - a. Abraham receives visitors (Genesis 18:1-8)
 - i. The Lord himself and two angels visit Abraham near Hebron (verses 1-3).¹
 - ii. Ministering to his heavenly visitors (18:4–8): Abraham prepares a meal of veal, cheese curds, milk, and bread for his visitors.²
 - b. The reaction of Sarah (verses 9-15).
 - c. The details (18:9–10): In her tent Sarah overhears the Lord’s promise concerning the birth of Isaac.³
 - d. Sarah laughs in unbelief (verses 11-12)
 - e. Is anything too hard for the Lord (verses 13-14)
 - f. The denial: in fear Sarah denies that she laughed in unbelief.
- II. The tragic news (Genesis 18:16-33)
 - a. The indictment against Sodom (verses 16-22)
 - i. Abraham’s faithfulness (verses 16-19); God determines to tell Abraham about his plan for the city of Sodom, since Abraham has been chosen to be the father of a righteous people.⁴
 - ii. Sodom: The Lord tells Abraham about the wickedness of Sodom (verses 20-22).
 - b. The intercession for Sodom (verses 23-33)
 - c. Pleading for fifty (18:23–26): Abraham asks if the Lord will spare the city for the sake of fifty righteous people found there. The Lord answers yes.⁵
 - d. Pleading for forty-five (18:27–28): For forty-five? Yes.⁶
 - e. Pleading for forty (18:29): For forty? Yes.⁷
 - f. Pleading for thirty (18:30): For thirty? Yes.⁸
 - g. Pleading for twenty (18:31): For twenty? Yes.⁹
 - h. Pleading for ten (18:32–33): For ten? Yes.¹⁰

Where the War Is Won

By Joni Eareckson Tada

¹ H. L. Willmington, [*The Outline Bible*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Ge 18:1–3.

² *Ibid*, Ge 18:4–8.

³ *Ibid*, Ge 18:9–10.

⁴ *Ibid*, Ge 18:16–19.

⁵ *Ibid*, Ge 18:23–26.

⁶ *Ibid*, Ge 18:23–28.

⁷ *Ibid*, Ge 18:29.

⁸ *Ibid*, Ge 18:30.

⁹ *Ibid*, Ge 18:31.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, Ge 18:32–33.

This Saturday, I'll be marking 55 years as a quadriplegic. Much joy has filled those years, and yet, I have never forgotten the panic and claustrophobia that overwhelmed me those first days and months.

Contemplating a future without hands that could hold things or legs that were limp and useless brought a suffocating fear. Nights were the hardest. At least when I sat up in a wheelchair, I could face things head-on. But at night, I would lie in bed, gravity pressing me into the mattress. I could not even raise my head on the pillow. In those dark hours, all of life looked bleak.

It was terrifying beyond description, and for many months I would sleep with the light on, the bedroom door open, and the drapes drawn back. Even so, there were many sleepless midnight hours.

It was around this time when I stumbled across Job 35:10 and read about God giving "songs in the night." If God gave songs to ease my nighttime anguish, I decided I would sing! I began singing in a whisper all the many hymns I had memorized throughout my childhood. In the whispered singing, a sweet peace settled over my terror-filled nights.

I am convinced the greatest victories for you and me are won away from the noise of day and the eyes of others. It is when we are alone, when it's dark and no one is around to help that our triumphs mean the most.

It was true for me 55 years ago and is still true today. I am still singing songs in the night to chase away discouragement and win victories for the Lord. Charles Spurgeon once wrote:

“Any man can sing during the day. When the cup is full, man draws inspiration from it. When money is in plentiful supply, any man can praise the God who provides an abundant harvest or sends home a loaded ship... the difficulty is for music to carry when no wind is stirring. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but it takes a skillful singer whose song springs forth when there is not a ray of light to read by... Let this voice be clear and this body full of health, and I can sing God’s praise: Silence my tongue, put me on a bed of suffering, and how will I then chant God’s high praises, unless He Himself provides the song? No, it is not in man’s power to sing when everything is against him, unless an altar-coal shall touch his lip... So, since our Maker gives “songs in the night,” let us wait upon Him for the music.”

*This is my Father’s world
Oh, may I never forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father’s world,
the battle is not done.
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
and earth and heaven be one.”*

Pray with me:

Thank you, God, for giving songs in the night when the hardest battles are fought. When I am alone, when it is dark and there is no one around to help, teach me to wait on you for the music. Teach me to sing brave music and see victory with the morning's light.

Moody:

*This chapter presents a beautiful picture of divine fellowship with humanity—one that shows that God's interaction with humanity during this postfall period of corruption and sin is not only about accomplishing tasks. He goes beyond tasks such as giving revelation, making covenants, enacting judgment, **but also emphasizes experiencing relationship, taking the time to relate to man even during the "downtime" or more "mundane" periods of life.***¹¹

Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch:

*Having been received into the covenant with God through the rite of circumcision, Abraham was shortly afterwards honoured by being allowed to receive and entertain the Lord and two angels in his tent. This fresh manifestation of God had a double purpose, viz., to establish Sarah's faith in the promise that she should bear a son in her old age (vv. 1–15), and to announce the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 16–33).*¹²

Detailed study:

- I. The tremendous news (Genesis 18:1-15)
 - a. Abraham receives visitors (Genesis 18:1-8)
 - i. The Lord himself and two angels visit Abraham near Hebron (verses 1-3).¹³
Genesis 18:1-3: *Now the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. ²When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them*

¹¹ Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., "[Genesis](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 75.

¹² Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 145–146.

¹³ H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Ge 18:1–3.

and bowed himself to the earth,³ and said, "My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by.

- ii. Now... so this is picking up after the previous incident. In the previous incident, the Lord gave Abram the covenant of circumcision and the Lord also changed his name to Abraham (Genesis 17:5).
- iii. IVP BBC: *The goatskin tents of pastoral nomadic people were designed to hold in heat at night with the flaps down and to allow a breeze to pass through during the day, when the flaps were up. Sitting at the entrance during the heat of the day would provide needed shade while a person enjoyed the breeze and guarded the tent's contents.*¹⁴
- iv. In the previous chapter, Sarai's name was changed to Sarah (Genesis 17:15).
- v. God was re-affirming the promise that he will be a father of multitude and it will be through Sarah, not Hagar.
- vi. Ishmael came about in Genesis 16.
- vii. So, now we are in context.
- viii. I love the description here.
- ix. Abraham is sitting by the tent door.
- x. It is the heat of the day.
- xi. The Lord appears to him by the oaks of Mamre.
- xii. We see this location in: Gen 13:18; 14:13
- xiii. *Although 13:18 reports that Abram settled at the oaks of Mamre many years earlier, he is still dwelling in a tent (cf. Heb. 11:9).*¹⁵
- xiv. The Lord appeared to him in Gen 12:7; 17:1
- xv. Now, how does the Lord appear to him.
- xvi. I think this is a Christophany, and Dr. Rydelnic agrees with me.
- xvii. God is spirit and so an appearance in bodily form would be Christ. Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. Hebrews 1:3–4 (NASB95): *³And He [Jesus] is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.*
- xviii. Colossians 1:15: *He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*
- xix. Verse 2: Abraham looks up and 3 men are standing opposite him.
- xx. If one is Jesus some think the others could be God, the Father, and God, the Holy Spirit, but they could be angels with Jesus. We know in Genesis 19 they are angels with Lot. In Genesis 19:1 it reads "the angels..."

¹⁴ Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ge 18:1.

¹⁵ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 81.

- xxi. Can you imagine this? I imagine Abraham falling asleep, taking a nap, or something else and he looks up and there they are.
- xxii. He knew these were important people and he bowed to them.
- xxiii. ESV SB: *Abraham's actions suggest that he viewed the men as exceptionally important. **he ran**. In the Middle East, an elderly man of some social standing would not normally respond in this way to visitors. **bowed himself to the earth**. While this may have been a common mode of greeting others (see 19:1), it shows that Abraham regards the visitors as worthy of great respect.*¹⁶
- xxiv. ESV SB: *Two of the "men" turn out to be angels (19:1), while the third is the Lord (18:22). The appearance of God in human form anticipates the incarnation of the Son (John 1:1–18).*¹⁷
- xxv. IVP BBC: *Hospitality customs required that all strangers who approached a dwelling were to be offered the opportunity to rest, refresh themselves and eat a meal. This was done to transform potential enemies into at least temporary friends. Protocol required that the meal served to the guest exceed what was first offered. Thus Abraham simply offers a meal, but what he orders prepared is freshly baked bread, a calf and a mixture of milk and yogurt. What is particularly generous here is the fresh meat, an item not usually found in their daily diet. This meal is similar to that offered by Danil to the representative of the gods, Kathar-wa-Hasis (when he comes traveling through town), in the Ugaritic epic of Aqhat.*¹⁸
- xxvi. Verse 3: Abraham pleads with them not to pass by.
- xxvii. ESV SB: **O Lord**. *The term here (Hb. 'Adonay) is a distinctive one for God in the OT (e.g., 20:4). The polite term of respect "my lord" (Hb. 'adoni) has a slight difference of spelling, affecting the last vowel (e.g., 23:6). The ESV text renders the Hebrew, while the footnote represents the different spelling. **If the spelling in the Hebrew text is correct—and there is no reason to doubt it—then Abraham recognizes that one of his visitors is a divine manifestation. This explains Abraham's part in the conversation of 18:22–33.***¹⁹
- xxviii. MacArthur: **My Lord**. *Although perhaps first used as the customary respectful address of a host to a visitor, later in their interchange it was used knowingly by Abraham of his true and sovereign Lord, whom he addressed as "Master"*

¹⁶ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 81.

¹⁷ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 81.

¹⁸ Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ge 18:2–5.

ESV English Standard Version

¹⁹ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 81.

(vv. 22, 30–32), and whom he must have recognized when the visitor spoke of Himself as “Lord” (v. 14).²⁰

- xxix. Ministering to his heavenly visitors (18:4–8): Abraham prepares a meal of veal, cheese curds, milk, and bread for his visitors.²¹

Genesis 18:4-8: ⁴“Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; ⁵and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant.” And they said, “So do, as you have said.” ⁶So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it and make bread cakes.” ⁸Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. He took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed it before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.

- xxx. Jesus wants to wash their feet. If one of them is Jesus that compares with John 13 and Jesus washing their feet.
- xxxii. Interesting, here we see Preincarnate Christ or theophany w real feet to be washed.
- xxxiii. IVP BBC OT: **foot washing**. *Washing the feet of guests was a standard act of hospitality in the dry, dusty climate that characterized much of the ancient Near East. Open leather sandals were common, as were enclosed soft leather boots. Neither style succeeded in keeping out the dirt of the road.*²²
- xxxiv. Abraham offers rest for them as well.
- xxxv. In verse 5 Abraham wants to bring them some bread.
- xxxvi. ESV SB: *Although Abraham speaks of a **little water** (v. 4) and a **morsel of bread** (v. 5), he proceeds to prepare a substantial meal.*²³
- xxxvii. This is similar to other encounters with angels.
- xxxviii. In verses 6-7 Abraham goes to Sarah and tells her to “quickly” prepare...
- xxxix. This equals 21 quarts of bread for 3 men which means they were great men and somehow Abraham knew that God was present.
- xl. NET: *Three measures (Heb “three seahs”) was equivalent to about twenty quarts (twenty-two liters) of flour, which would make a lot of bread. The animal prepared for the meal was far more than the three visitors needed. This was a banquet for royalty. Either it had been a lonely time for Abraham and the presence of visitors made him very happy, or he sensed this was a momentous visit.*²⁴

²⁰ John F. MacArthur Jr., [The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Ge 18:3.

²¹ Ibid, Ge 18:4–8.

²² Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ge 18:4.

²³ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 81.

²⁴ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 18:6.

- xl. *The bread was the simple, round bread made by bedouins that is normally prepared quickly for visitors.*²⁵
 - xli. Compare with Judges 6:19.
 - xlii. Keil and Delitzsch: *The eating of material food on the part of these heavenly beings was not in appearance only, but was really eating; an act which may be attributed to the corporeality assumed, and is to be regarded as analogous to the eating on the part of the risen and glorified Christ (Luke 24:41ff.), although the miracle still remains physiologically incomprehensible.*²⁶
 - xliii. In verse 7 Abraham gets a calf from the herd as well.
 - xliv. In verse 8: Abraham gives them the food and milk and he stood by them as they ate.
 - xlvi. ESV SB: *Abraham does not eat with the men, but like a servant, he waits on them. The events of vv. 2–8 (and 19:1–3) are probably alluded to in Heb. 13:2.*²⁷
 - xlvii. CSB: *Abraham’s behavior shows him to be a better host than Lot (19:1–3).*²⁸
- b. The reaction of Sarah (verses 9-15).

Genesis 18:9–15 (NASB95)

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

10He said, “I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.

11Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing.

12Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”

13And the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?’

14“Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

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

- c. So, now the angels and the 3rd man, likely, the preincarnate Christ ask them where Sarah is.
- d. The details (18:9–10): In her tent Sarah overhears the Lord’s promise concerning the birth of Isaac.²⁹ In verse 10, “He” presumable Jesus, shares that in 1 year Sarah will have a son. Wow! She is about 89 years old. Genesis 17:17 has Abraham questioning a woman having a child at 90 years old.

²⁵ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 18:6.

²⁶ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 146.

²⁷ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 81.

²⁸ Robert D. Bergen, [“Genesis,”](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 36.

²⁹ *Ibid*, Ge 18:9–10.

- e. CSB: *In keeping with western Asian customs still practiced in traditional Muslim culture today, the host's wife was not permitted to be in the presence of male visitors. But since her tent walls were thin and the conversation was interesting, Sarah was listening to every word. During or after the meal the Lord confirmed the promise made in 17:21, that in about a year's time ... Sarah would already have given birth to a son. This promise was fulfilled (21:1–2).*³⁰
- f. NET: Heb "he"; the referent (one of the three men introduced in v. 2) has been specified in the translation for clarity. *Some English translations have specified the referent as the LORD (cf. RSV, NIV) based on vv. 1, 13, but the Hebrew text merely has "he said" at this point, referring to one of the three visitors. Aside from the introductory statement in v. 1, the incident is narrated from Abraham's point of view, and the suspense is built up for the reader as Abraham's elaborate banquet preparations in the preceding verses suggest he suspects these are important guests. But not until the promise of a son later in this verse does it become clear who is speaking. In v. 13 the Hebrew text explicitly mentions the LORD.*³¹
- g. ESV SB: *The miraculous birth of a son according to the power of God's word anticipates later instances where God's word overcomes a "dead" womb and brings new life: 25:21; 30:22; 1 Sam. 1:20; Isa. 54:1. The pattern culminates in the virgin birth of Christ (Luke 1:35), and has relevance for understanding God's sovereignty in election (Rom. 9:8–9).*³²
- h. MacArthur: *Despite a promise clearly reminiscent of God's words to Abraham, Sarah reacted with similar incredulity as her husband had done (cf. 17:17). She was not thinking of divine miracle but of divine providence working only within the normal course of life, being convinced that, at their age, bearing children was just not naturally possible.*³³
- i. Moody: *Notably Abraham received this reiteration of God's promise without any expression of doubt; apparently his faith was growing in concert with the anticipation of its near realization. Sarah, on the other hand, who heard this from God for the first time while **listening at the tent door**, responded as Abraham did in the previous chapter—with laughter (v. 12). In Sarah's case, however, the laughter was **to herself** (lit., "within herself"), that is, it was internalized laughter, accompanied by the disbelief that she might still **have pleasure**, both she and her*

³⁰ Robert D. Bergen, "[Genesis](#)," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 36–37.

RSV Revised Standard Version

NIV The New International Version

³¹ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 18:10.

³² Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 81.

³³ John F. MacArthur Jr., [The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Ge 18:9–13.

v. verse

lit. literally

- husband being old (lit., past childbearing, postmenopausal). In God's response to Sarah's disbelief, notably, He was just as gentle and patient as He was toward Abraham. As He did with Eve, so with Sarah; God was concerned foremost with her spiritual welfare and with having her confront her sin squarely. So He rephrased her faithless thought in more direct fashion: **Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?** (v. 13). That God intended to perform a miracle by permitting Sarah to become pregnant from Abraham is evident from his following statement, **Is anything too difficult for the LORD?** (v. 14). The word translated **difficult** which means "wonderful," is applied to God (Jdg 13:18; Is 9:6) and the divine and/or miraculous actions He performs (Ps 139:14; Is 29:14).³⁴*
- j. Sarah was listening at the tent door.
 - k. Verse 11 says that they were old and advanced in years. Sarah was past childbearing (literally, the manner of women).
 - l. Sarah laughs in unbelief (verses 11-12)
 - m. Verse 12 *Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"*
 - n. Her laugh is a laugh in disbelief, a lack of faith (Dr. Rydelnic, Open Line on Moody Radio 08.14.2021). It says that she laughed to herself.
 - o. Keil and Delitzsch: *Abraham also had laughed at this promise (Gen. 17:17), and without receiving any reproof. For his laughing was the joyous outburst of astonishment; Sarah's, on the contrary, the result of doubt and unbelief, which had to be broken down by reproof, and, as the result showed, really was broken down, inasmuch as she conceived and bore a son, whom she could only have conceived in faith (Heb. 11:11).*³⁵
 - p. "pleasure": NET: *It has been suggested that this word should be translated "conception," not "pleasure." See A. A. McIntosh, "A Third Root 'adah in Biblical Hebrew," VT 24 (1974): 454-73.*³⁶
 - q. Is anything too hard for the Lord (verses 13-14)
 - r. Verse: 14 *"Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."*
 - s. NET: *Sarah will have a son. The passage brings God's promise into clear focus. As long as it was a promise for the future, it really could be believed without much involvement. But now, when it seemed so impossible from the human standpoint,*

lit. literally

v. verse

v. verse

³⁴ Michael A. Rydelnic and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., "[Genesis](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 75.

³⁵ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 146.

VT *Vetus Testamentum* (a journal)

³⁶ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 18:12.

when the LORD fixed an exact date for the birth of the child, the promise became rather overwhelming to Abraham and Sarah. But then this was the LORD of creation, the one they had come to trust. The point of these narratives is that the creation of Abraham's offspring, which eventually became Israel, is no less a miraculous work of creation than the creation of the world itself.³⁷

- t. I love how the Lord questions, this is the Lord.
 - u. The Lord asks why she laughs.
 - v. The denial: in fear Sarah denies that she laughed in unbelief.
 - w. Sarah denied it, but He said "No, but you did."
 - x. Abraham and Sarah are not here shown as models of faith but rejected faith.³⁸
- II. The tragic news (Genesis 18:16-33)
- a. The indictment against Sodom (verses 16-22)
 - i. Abraham's faithfulness (verses 16-19); God determines to tell Abraham about his plan for the city of Sodom, since Abraham has been chosen to be the father of a righteous people.³⁹

Genesis 18:16–22 (NASB95)

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

¹⁷*The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,*

¹⁸*since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?*

¹⁹*"For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."*

²⁰*And the LORD said, "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.*

²¹*"I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know."*

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

- ii. Verse 16: I love this picture. Abraham is walking with the Lord and the Lord tells him His plans.
- iii. Keil and Delitzsch: *Abraham accompanied them some distance on the road; according to tradition, he went as far as the site of the later Caphar barucha, from which you can see the Dead Sea through a ravine, —solitudinem ac terras Sodomae.*⁴⁰

³⁷ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 18:14.

³⁸ White Horse Inn; 06.06.2021

³⁹ Ibid, Ge 18:16–19.

⁴⁰ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 147.

- iv. This is the case even though Abraham and Sarah have had some faith issues. Think about that when you are too hard on yourself.
- v. Verses 17-19 is interesting: IS the Lord saying this outloud?
- vi. Amos 3:7 (ESV): ⁷“For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.
- vii. Verse 18 endorses that Abraham will become as great and mighty nation...
- viii. *All the nations of the earth will be blessed through him.*
- ix. God is endorsing the covenant.
- x. God is endorsing this unconditional covenant!
- xi. Couched in this passage we see a really amazing statement about Abraham and future blessing and we do not want to miss it.
- xii. Verse 19: The Lord has chosen Abraham that... [this means purpose]
- xiii. Moody: ***I have chosen him*** (v. [19](#)). *By this statement God was reinforcing a profound fact that likewise applies to every believer, for the verb here translated **chosen literally signifies “knowing.”** Hence “I have come to know him.” Throughout the OT this verb denotes the deepest or most “intimate” possible knowledge of the object in view. It usually refers to one of three types: (1) knowledge of information, usually acquired by experience; (2) one person’s thorough knowledge of another person acquired by sexual intercourse (or sodomy; cf. [19:5](#)); and (3) God’s thorough knowledge of human individuals acquired by union with the Holy Spirit—in [Jn 10:27](#) Jesus intended this third type of knowledge when He said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (italics added). By contrast, not to be known by God leads ultimately to “perishing” ([Ps 1:6](#)) or the “second death” ([Rv 20:6](#))—that is, being severed eternally from the experience of His love.⁴¹*
- xiv. Abraham is chosen that he may command his children- see Deut 6:6-7
- xv. and his household after him [his descendants] to keep the way of the Lord by doing
- xvi. righteousness
- xvii. justice
- xviii. “So that” this means purpose
- xix. The Lord may bring upon Abraham what is spoken about him...
- xx. What was spoken about him? The promise, the covenant.

⁴¹ v. v. verse

OT OT Old Testament

cf. cf. compare or consult

¹ Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, eds., “[Genesis](#),” in *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 76.

- xxi. It seems that God willed that this would happen through his descendants keeping the way of the Lord, doing righteousness, justice, and keeping the way of the Lord.

Breakpoint 09.22.2021

Some people think that Christian interest in education is only instrumental. In other words, we start schools so that we can tell our kids about Jesus Christ and how to become Christians. Of course, there's nothing wrong with that, but the Christian understanding of education goes much deeper.

Throughout human history, wherever the Church has gone, education has followed. This is because of how Christianity understands life and the world, particularly the nature of reality itself and the human person. Education doesn't make sense in a worldview that is only about survival. In a worldview that is only about survival, education is only utilitarian.

But within a worldview that says that the world itself came from a first cause that is intelligent, reasonable, knowable, and – this is important – wants to be known, there is solid grounding for actual knowledge, and therefore education.

Christianity says that God has made us in his own image. In other words, not only is God knowable, but humans are knowers. So, the act of learning is nothing less than, as Johannes Kepler put it, thinking God's thoughts after him. Knowing God's world leads to knowing God, and knowing God is what life is all about.

This week, on a very special edition of the Breakpoint Podcast, I spoke with one of the most outstanding leaders in education in the Christian world, Vishal Mangalwadi. He's the author of several books, including The Book That Changed Your World, and most recently The Third Education Revolution, in which he traces both the history of the Christian promotion of education around the world and the opportunity we have in front of us right now. Here's a segment of that interview with Vishal Mangalwadi:

In a biblical worldview, Satan is out to deceive the nations, that's Revelation 20. The church is out to disciple the nations. God says to Abraham, "if you follow me, I will bless you. I will make you a great nation." But how would Abraham become a great nation?

God says in Genesis 18: 18-19 that Abraham would become a great nation because he would instruct, he would teach, he would command, he would disciple his children. And his household is a blessing and is non-ethnic.

So, it was by teaching them to walk in God's ways that Israel would become a great nation and Israel would become a light to the nations. Nations would flock to the

love of God to learn to bring peace. So from the very beginning of the calling of Abraham to follow Him is a teaching of education.

In India, 100 years ago, a carpenter, or a fisherman, or a shepherd did not go to school. But what you find in the New Testament is a tentmaker writing, a shepherd writing, a fisherman writing. Where did they learn to read and write? They'd entered the synagogue. The priest, on the sabbath, was the teacher. He was a master educating others during the five days of the week, or whatever.

Every child has to be educated. God has given his law, and is saying, "You make copies of them." They complained, "We don't have pen and paper." God says, "Don't complain, don't make excuses. You write it on your doorpost, you write it on your walls. You teach your women to learn to write as they're stitching their clothes. They must write them in your clothes." The objective is, if you're meditating upon the law of God, day and night, you're not just memorizing, but meditating. It is written on your heart.

You can't reform a nation if there is no objective written text with which you can critique your teachers. Martin Luther critiqued universities, he critiqued the church, and said this is what God says: the church needs to reform. So, the written Word is people becoming people of the book. And this was key to the opening of the Western mind.⁴²

- xxii. Sodom: The Lord tells Abraham about the wickedness of Sodom (verses 20-22).
- xxiii. Note: the Lord did not just figure this out. He knew.
- xxiv. Outcry is using anthropomorphic language.
- xxv. Their sin is grave!!!
- xxvi. Verse 21: the Lord will go down... anthropomorphic language, though He will send His angels to rescue Lot.
- xxvii. NET: *I must go down. The descent to "see" Sodom is a bold anthropomorphism, stressing the careful judgment of God. The language is reminiscent of the LORD going down to see the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:1-9.*⁴³
- xxviii. NET: *according to the outcry that has come to me they have done completely." Even the LORD, who is well aware of the human capacity to sin,*

⁴² https://breakpoint.org/why-the-church-has-such-a-long-history-of-leading-in-education/?_hsmi=162381826&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8PQBEaVpFR8eP-qAJpDZ8Vjo-l-jq2zWEfAAH6_xRajIY0KbNNAPQE9UB5Hb-jvRPzm1tkszv_U5gTVKIJKUpv1p63qQ

⁴³ Biblical Studies Press, [*The NET Bible First Edition Notes*](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 18:21.

*finds it hard to believe that anyone could be as bad as the “outcry” against Sodom and Gomorrah suggests.*⁴⁴

- xxix. If not, I will know... anthropomorphic language.
- xxx. Verse 22: the other men, angels head towards Sodom. Abraham stays with the Lord. This is really cool! Here he is with the Lord in human form.
- xxxi. NET: Heb “And the men turned from there.” The word “two” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied here for clarity. Gen 19:1 mentions only two individuals (described as “angels”), while Abraham had entertained three visitors (18:2). The implication is that the LORD was the third visitor, who remained behind with Abraham here. The words “from there” are not included in the translation for stylistic reasons.⁴⁵
- xxxii. NET: An ancient Hebrew scribal tradition reads “but the LORD remained standing before Abraham.” This reading is problematic because the phrase “standing before” typically indicates intercession, but the LORD would certainly not be interceding before Abraham.⁴⁶
- xxxiii. CSB: The Lord would investigate **Sodom and Gomorrah** for two reasons: **the outcry** coming from their victims was **immense**, and the cities’ **sin** was **extremely serious**. According to Ezk 16:49–50, the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah included self-centered pride, neglect of the poor and needy, and doing unnamed detestable things. According to Gn 19:5–9, one of the “detestable acts” was attempted homosexual gang rape. Through his appointed representatives the Lord would experience **what justified the cry that had come up to him**.⁴⁷

b. The intercession for Sodom (verses 23-33)

Genesis 18:23–33 (NASB95)

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

²⁴“Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?

²⁵“Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”

²⁶So the LORD said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account.”

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

⁴⁴ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 18:21.

⁴⁵ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 18:22.

⁴⁶ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 18:22.

⁴⁷ Robert D. Bergen, “[Genesis](#),” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 37.

²⁸“Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five?” And He said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”

²⁹He spoke to Him yet again and said, “Suppose forty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do it on account of the forty.”

³⁰Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”

³¹And he said, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy it on account of the twenty.”

³²Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy it on account of the ten.”

³³As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the LORD departed, and Abraham returned to his place.

- c. Pleading for fifty (18:23–26): Abraham asks if the Lord will spare the city for the sake of fifty righteous people found there. The Lord answers yes.⁴⁸
- d. Keil and Delitzsch: *This “seemingly commercial kind of entreaty is,” as Delitzsch observes, “the essence of true prayer. It is the holy ἀναίδεια, of which our Lord speaks in Luke 11:8, the shamelessness of faith...⁴⁹*
- e. CSB: *This passage is one of the three greatest illustrations of petitionary prayer in the OT (cp. Ex 32:11–14; Am 7:1–6). Abraham got the Lord to agree to spare Sodom if six successively smaller totals of **righteous people** could be found within **the city**. Clearly evident in the section are Abraham’s respect for God (exemplified by him **standing before the LORD**, v. 22; cp. v. 27), his confidence in God’s power and justice (vv. 23, 25), and the patriarch’s compassionate concern for Lot and the other inhabitants of Sodom. At the same time the Lord’s extravagant mercy is seen in his willingness to spare the entire city **on account of ten** righteous people who lived there.⁵⁰*
- f. Verse 23: Abraham asks of the Lord... will You really do this?
- g. Verse 24: suppose 50 righteous people.
- h. Verse 25: I love the humility in which Abraham asks this: far be it from You to do such a thing...
- i. **Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is right? That is an important statement.**

⁴⁸ Ibid, Ge 18:23–26.

⁴⁹ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [*Commentary on the Old Testament*](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 148.

OT Old Testament

cp. compare

v. verse

cp. compare

v. verse

vv. verses

⁵⁰ Robert D. Bergen, [*“Genesis.”*](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 37.

j. Yes, HE DOES.

- k. There is no one righteous (Romans 3:23)
- l. **God comes down to show that He is just!**
- m. Deuteronomy 32:4 (ESV): *“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.*
- n. Verse 26: The Lord responds, remember He is right there.
- o. If 50 righteous God will spare the whole place.
- p. Notice the continual humility in Abraham.
- q. Pleading for forty-five (18:27–28): For forty-five? Yes.⁵¹
- r. Notice Abraham’s humility: ***I am but dust and ashes.*** *Abraham’s negotiation, far from being crassly or selfishly manipulative, humbly and compassionately expressed his concern for people (cf. 13:8, 9) and particularly interceded for the place where his nephew Lot and his family lived. Neither did he intend to anger the Lord by his repeated requests (vv. 28, 30, 32).⁵²*
- s. Pleading for forty (18:29): For forty? Yes.⁵³
- t. Pleading for thirty (18:30): For thirty? Yes.⁵⁴
- u. Pleading for twenty (18:31): For twenty? Yes.⁵⁵
- v. Pleading for ten (18:32–33): For ten? Yes.⁵⁶ ***on account of the ten.*** *That the number of righteous people necessary to forestall judgment had been reduced from 50 to 10 may have reflected Abraham’s awareness both of the intense wickedness of the cities as well as Lot’s ineffective witness there. Abraham probably had the whole of Lot’s family in mind.⁵⁷*
- w. We see Abraham’s heart and God’s heart.
- x. The Lord departed from him.
- y. MacArthur: ***the LORD departed, and Abraham returned to his place.*** *Nothing more could be done; the judgment was inevitable!⁵⁸*

Breakpoint commentary 12.21.2018

A modern verification of an ancient event and tangible evidence of an ancient person. And once again, biblical history is verified.

⁵¹ Ibid, Ge 18:23–28.

⁵² John F. MacArthur Jr., [*The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Ge 18:27.

⁵³ Ibid, Ge 18:29.

⁵⁴ Ibid, Ge 18:30.

⁵⁵ Ibid, Ge 18:31.

⁵⁶ Ibid, Ge 18:32–33.

⁵⁷ John F. MacArthur Jr., [*The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Ge 18:32.

⁵⁸ John F. MacArthur Jr., [*The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Ge 18:33.

Our team of thinkers and writers at the Colson Center are archaeology nerds. Seriously, we get giddy whenever another archaeological discovery sheds light on biblical narratives or confirms their historical accuracy. And even more fun, it seems to happen all the time these days.

Keep in mind that biblical faith is grounded in historical events, events to which the Bible testifies. This is one of the factors that sets the Bible apart from other religious texts. Recently, two announcements made illustrate the truthfulness of Scripture, one in a spectacular way and the other more quietly.

The spectacular illustration was the subject of a recent presentation at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research, held here in Colorado. At the meeting, Archaeologist Phillip J. Silva of Trinity Southwest University reported on what his team found in Jordan just north of the Dead Sea.

“Samples from the site show that an extremely hot, explosive event,” in all likelihood an exploding meteor, “leveled an area of almost 200 square miles including the Middle Ghor – a circular plain to the north of the Dead Sea.” The blast not only destroyed “100 percent of the Middle Bronze Age cities and towns” in the area, it rendered the area unsuitable for agriculture for about six centuries.

Now unless you dig things blowing up, you might be wondering “What’s the big deal?” After all, in 1908 a similar blast in Siberia leveled more than 500 square miles.

Well, what makes this “extremely hot” event extremely cool is the location and the date. Silvan and his team are convinced the site of “the explosive event” is the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah, and that it occurred around 3,700 years ago, which is about the same time that Abraham and his nephew Lot were sojourning in the area.

While Silva’s discovery can’t tell us whether, in Forbes’ words, “someone, perhaps a deity, [ordered] an asteroid hit on Sodom,” it’s yet another reminder that the biblical writers were not making things up. They purposely wrote of historical events that took place in the real world, not in some mythical setting.

Now many scholars doubt that Sodom ever existed, much less that it was destroyed in some divinely-ordained cataclysm. This puts us a bit closer to establishing that it did exist and that it was destroyed in a cataclysm around the time the biblical narrative reports.

Less spectacular but not less important was another discovery of a ring bearing the inscription “of Pilates” in the ruins of Herodium in the West Bank. The ring was excavated in 1969, but only recently did advanced photographic techniques enable researchers to read the inscription on it.

Unlike Sodom, Pilate’s existence was never in doubt. The discovery of the “Pilate stone” in 1961 convinced researchers that New Testament references to the Roman prefect who ordered Jesus’ crucifixion weren’t made up.

Still, apart from the New Testament and the writings of the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, we know very little about Pilate.

Part of the significance of this discovery is where Pilate's ring was found: in the ruins of Herod's fortress, hence the name "Herodium." And so, we have physical evidence of two biblical characters carrying on in the way the New Testament tells us that they did.

Another word for that is "history."

Both the Apostles and Nicene creeds assign Pontius Pilate a central role in the story of our salvation. He's one of only three people named in the creeds along with the Virgin Mary and our Lord. It's obvious why the latter two are in there, but why is Pilate included?

Because the reference to Pilate anchors our confession in human history. Jesus did not suffer, die, and undergo burial in some gauzy "once-upon-a-time," but in actual history on the orders of a real person who even left evidence of his existence.

Unlike other religions, our salvation is grounded in history, and the restoration for which Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate" will also take place within history. In other words, Christianity is the real deal.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ <https://www.breakpoint.org/breakpoint-it-go-boom/>