

Genesis 18

Verse 1-5

Now the Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. ² When he raised 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 and bowed down to the ground, ³ and said, "My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by. ⁴ Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and make yourselves comfortable under the tree; ⁵ and I will bring a piece of bread, so 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."

Now the Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre

Abraham moved to this area in chapter 13 at least 15 years ago

Three men were standing opposite him

The "three men" were not men at all

But the Lord accompanied by two angels

He ran from the tent door to meet them

Not bad for a guy that is 99 years old

But given the fact that he lived to be 175, he is like a 50 year old in our time

He seems genuinely excited to see them

Please do not pass Your servant by

There is no indication that Abraham recognized who his guests were

He was simply displaying courtesy and honor to strangers

A little water ... a piece of bread

He minimizes the kindness that he is about to make

But in fact he treats them with a feast

Verses 6-8

⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead *it*, and make bread cakes.” ⁷ Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave *it* to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. ⁸ He took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *it* before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.

What sticks out to you in these verses?

So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah

Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour

Abraham also ran to the herd

And he hurried to prepare it

Verse 9-10

⁹ Then they said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” ¹⁰ He said, “I will certainly return to you at this time next year; and behold, your wife Sarah will have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.

Then they said to him

What the Lord said was attributed to all three

Behold, your wife Sarah will have a son

Up to this point, the identity of Abraham's guests were unknown

But now both Sarah and Abraham had to know the nature of their guests

And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent

Sarah was eavesdropping

Just like every one of us would have been

Verse 11-15

¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. ¹² **So Sarah laughed to herself**, saying, “After I have become old, am I to have pleasure, my lord being old also?” ¹³ But the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I actually give birth *to 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.” ¹⁵ Sarah denied *it*, however, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

So Sarah laughed to herself

From her point of view she was too old to give birth to a child

She also thought that Abraham was too old

But there is no doubt that Sarah laughed for the wrong reason

But the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh ... Is anything too difficult for the Lord?”

Up to this point, they may have thought these 3 men were messengers from God

But now they find out that one of the three men is God in the flesh

So the question, is anything too difficult for the Lord, needs no reply

Because with God all things are possible

See Matthew 19:26

The one who created all things, controls all things and He can change them at will

The purpose of this interaction may have been to strengthen Sarah's faith

Because at first she did not believe but we know she changed her mind

See Hebrews 11:11

The writer of Hebrews was commenting on her faith after this event

Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid

None of us want to be found out in a moment of weakness

But it turned out that this helped her grow in her faith

Verses 16-19

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 certainly 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."

Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom

Abraham was at Mamre (close to Hebron)

The elevation of Hebron is 2,800 feet above sea level

There is some debate about the location of Sodom and Gomorrah

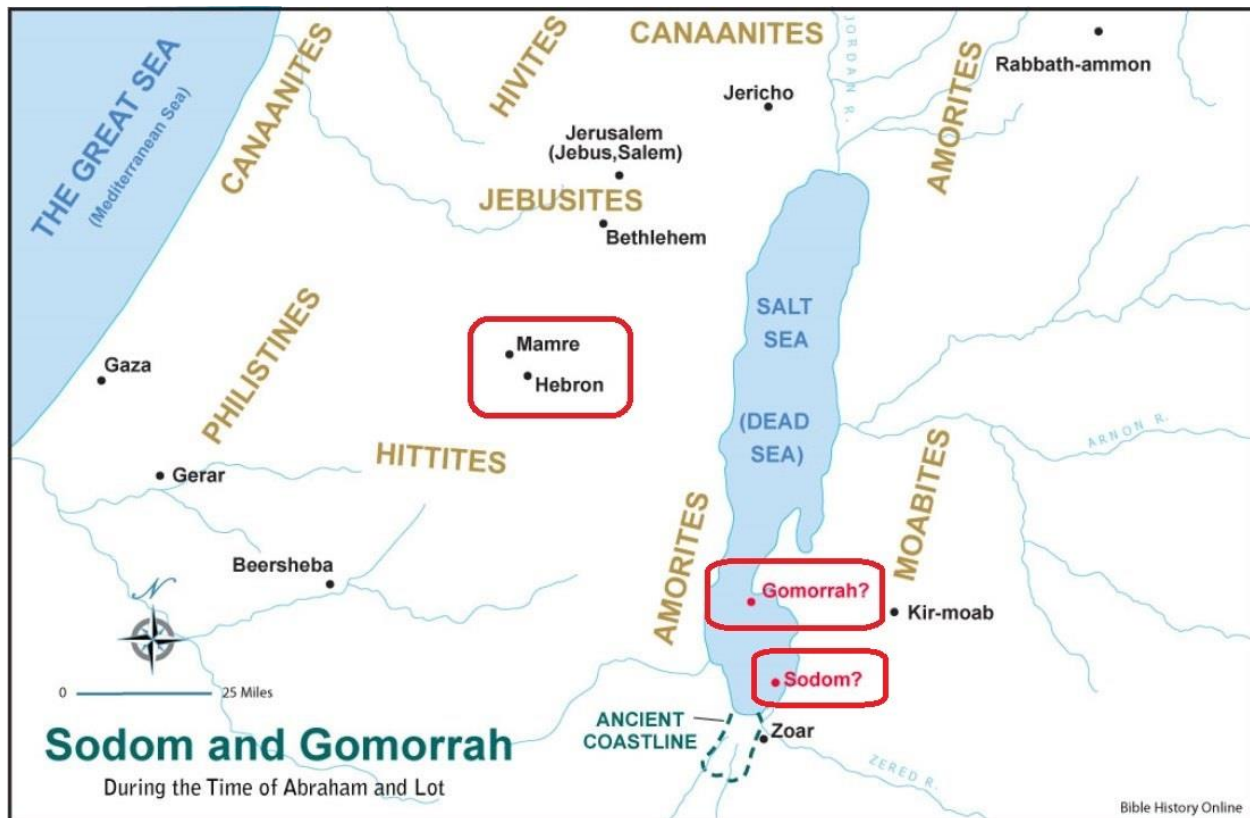
But most agree they were near the Dead Sea

The Dead Sea is 1000 to 1300 feet below sea level

The lowest point on land in the world

So this is a 4000 foot decline in the 40 mile trip

See map 1805



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,

Why did God reveal the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah?

It was important for Abraham to pass down the ways of the Lord to his family

Part of this was warning them of God's judgment on sinful lifestyles

Abraham could point back to the global flood but that was 1200 years ago

This would be a local and recent judgment that his family could see

So that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him

The blessing that God had promised to Abraham were conditional

Verse 20-21

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 whether they have done entirely as the outcry, which has come to Me *indicates*; and if not, I will know.”

I will go down now and see

This represents God having heard a very bad report about these cities

And making a personal trip down in order to have the facts first hand

We know that God knows all things, but this is a way to demonstrate God’s concern for justice and fairness

Verse 22 -25

²² Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the Lord. ²³ Abraham approached and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous people 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 kill 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?”

While Abraham was still standing before the Lord

The two angels depart for Sodom but Abraham remained with the Lord

Abraham approached and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”

Is Abraham questioning God’s righteousness?

He could have just asked God --- Is there any way the city can be spared?

But God doesn’t rebuke him

Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?

The same question comes to mind

Is Abraham questioning God's fairness?

Again, God does not rebuke him for it

Verses 26-33

So the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom **fifty** righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account." ²⁷ And Abraham replied, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am *but* dust and ashes. 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." ²⁹ He 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**." ³⁰ Then 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." ³¹ And 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." ³² Then 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." ³³ As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the Lord departed, and Abraham returned to his place.

And Abraham replied, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am *but* dust and ashes

This answers the question: Is Abraham questioning God's fairness?

Abraham knew his place, and was not questioning God's fairness

There is no doubt that Abraham was concerned for the safety of Lot

But he was also pleading with the Lord for the sake of any innocent people

After all, he had rescued many of these people

See Genesis 14:1-16

Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five

This is the fine art of negotiating

50 – 45 – 40 – 30 – 20 - 10

And He said, “I will not destroy *it* on account of the ten

Unfortunately, Sodom did not have 10 righteous people in it