

GENESIS 18

Genesis 18:1–33

**God Visits Abraham before the Birth of His Son;
Abraham Bargains with God about the Judgment of Sodom**

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Links to the [word-by-word](#), [verse-by-verse studies](#) of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

What follows is a collection of the weekly lessons of Genesis ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) interspersed with the complete word-by-word exegesis of this chapter from the Hebrew with most of the text from my original Genesis exegesis ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) added in. Furthermore, the examination of this chapter has been expanded with additional commentary as well. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined. At some point in the future, I need to go back and edit this material and consider other source material as well.

One more thing: **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables.** They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them.¹ However, if you ever doubt a translation of a phrase or a verse, these translation tables will tell you exactly where that translation came from.

Preface: There are two sections in Genesis 18: (1) God and two angels come to Abraham and tell him that, a year from now, he and Sarah will have a son. (2) God speaks to Abraham about judgment for Sodom, and Abraham asks about how many believers would be necessary there in order to preserve the city. When he is assured by God that ten righteous men will deliver the city, he stops, figuring that there are that many in Sodom.

This should be the most extensive examination of Genesis 18 available, where you will be able to see every word of the original text.

Genesis 18:1 [Then the LORD appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre while he was sitting in the entrance of his tent during the heat of the day. \(HCSB\)](#)

Gen. 18:11–14 [Now Abraham and Sarah were very old, and Sarah was past the time for giving birth. And Sarah, laughing to herself, said, Now that I am used up am I still to have pleasure, my husband himself being old? And the Lord said, Why was Sarah laughing and saying, Is it possible for me, being old, to give birth to a child? Is there any wonder which the Lord is not able to do? At the time I said, in the spring, I will come back to you, and Sarah will have a child. \(BBE\)](#)

Kukis: Abraham will stand in front of God and plead for the city of Sodom, because his nephew lives there. Now I want you to step back from this chapter, and look at it from a distance. Abraham is sleeping, and Y^ehowah and the angels nearly walk right past him. If this would have been the case, then he could not have acted as an intermediary for his nephew Lot. However, Abraham wakes up from his sleeping and then he has fellowship with God. Because of this fellowship, Abraham is able to stand before God and intercede for Lot. The parallel is quite simple. If we are asleep—out of fellowship—then all that goes on in the world which is spiritual passes us by. We do not have any input. However, if we are in fellowship with God, then we have standing with Him and we can plead whatever cause is important to us (which God wants us to do).

J. Vernon McGee: *Abraham is going to have a tremendous influence. He is going to influence multitudes of people, including the succeeding generations. That is true right now today. As I write and as you read this book, Abraham is influencing us - we cannot avoid it.*²

¹ This was done as a result of the complaints of a close friend, now face to face with the Lord, who said that I intermingled the Hebrew and the explanation so much that he did not like it. Therefore, all of the Hebrew exegesis is visually set apart and may be easily skipped over.

² From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed January 2, 2014.

Outline of Chapter 18:**Introduction**

- vv. 1–15 **Y^ehowah God and Two Angels Come to Abraham, to Reassert the Promises to Him**
 vv. 16–33 **Abraham Bargains with God Concerning the Impending Judgment of Sodom**

Addendum**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines:**

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 Introduction **The Principals of Genesis 18**
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Doctrines Alluded To			
Angels (Angelology)	Angel of Jehovah	Doctrine of Dispensations	
Client Nation	Heathenism		Doctrine of the Spiritual Life

Chapters of the Bible Alluded To			
Genesis 17			

Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Definition of Terms	
4th Stage of Discipline	This is when a foreign nation comes in and rule over the country which is under discipline. These stages of discipline were devised primarily for nation Israel, but there is some application to us today.
5th Stage of National Discipline	This is the stage of discipline God brings upon Israel when the people are removed from their own land and taken into slavery by some foreign power.
Angelic Conflict	The angelic conflict is the result of prehistoric creatures being in opposition to God. It began with the independence and rebellion of the one who was the Messiah's angel, Satan, and it continues throughout human history until the end of the Millennium. The angelic conflict answers many basic questions about life, such as - "Why was man created? Why sin? Why is there chaos on earth? Why is there so much suffering? Why did our Lord Jesus Christ have to go to the cross?" ³
Blessing by Association	Friends and relatives and associates of a spiritually mature believer receive some overflow of blessing from that believer.
Christian nation	This is a term which has been tossed around for years, for for which few could give a solid definition. Many understand a Christian nation to be that in which the government encourages and even mandates Christianity among its people. Since such a concept is anti-Biblical because it implies state-interference with free will, a new term needed to be developed.
Client Nation	Client-Nation, is a national entity in which a certain number of spiritually mature Christians (the salt of the earth) have formed a pivot sufficient to sustain the nation and through which God specifically protects this nation so that believers can fulfill the divine mandates of evangelism, communication and custodianship of Bible doctrine, providing a haven for Jews, and sending missionaries abroad. The United States is a client-nation to God. A client nation must have freedom: Freedom to seek God, freedom to use one's own volition and self-determination to succeed or fail, freedom from anarchy and tyranny, freedom for evangelism, freedom for believers to hear Bible teaching without government interference and, therefore, to grow spiritually, and freedom to send missionaries to other nations.
Corporate Judgement	God judges nations, states, cities, neighborhoods and various other organizations of people. This is known as corporate judgment. When we belong to such a place, we might receive judgment ourselves (however, we will see that God will rescue Lot from the corporate judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah).
Cosmic System	The term "cosmic system" refers to Satan's plan and process for controlling the world, and his attempt, using his organization of fallen angels, to counteract the plan of God in all respects.

³ From <http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=fea&pid=2> accessed August 31, 2013.

Definition of Terms	
Dispensations	<p>God divides up human history into large blocks of time, and God has a slightly different program for each block of time. For instance, during the Age of Israel, God worked primarily through the nation Israel—through its kings, judges, prophets and priests, and through His people, the Jews.</p> <p>During the Church Age, spiritual growth usually occurs as a result of the function of the local church. However, God still deals with national entities, like nations, cities, states, geographical areas, businesses, schools, etc.</p>
Erotesis	A question which does not require an answer.
The Five Cycles of Discipline (Stages of National Discipline)	A national entity which is a client nation to God is under both God's protection and His discipline (much like the individual believer). As a nation moves further and further from God, God may impose disciplinary measures on that nation, which include economic disaster, illness, civil unrest, military defeat, and even invasion which may include a slavery or dispersion of the people. These cycles are found in Leviticus 26. Although these warnings are designed for Israel, all client nations to God may face similar downward historical trends.
Hapax Legomenon	An hapax legomenon [pronounced, <i>HAP-aks li-GOM-uh-non</i> , also, <i>hey-PAKS</i>] (plural: hapax legomena [pronounced: <i>HAP-aks li-GOM-uh-nuh</i> , and <i>hey-PAKS</i>]), is a word or phrase that appears only once in a manuscript, document, or particular area of literature. ⁴
Invisible Heroes	Believers who execute the plan of God. They preserve the city, state and nation in which they live.
Laws of Divine Establishment	These are laws which are devised by God for the human race (for believers and unbelievers alike). The more aligned a country is with these laws, the greater freedom and prosperity that country will enjoy. Furthermore, there will be greater evangelism and Bible teaching which takes place. The further a country strays from these law results in greater tyranny and unhappiness among its population.
Paronomasia	A paronomasia is where similar sounding words are synonymous, antithetical or of varied significance. This is a figure of speech only occasionally found in the Bible.
Pivot	These are the mature and maturing believers in a geographical or corporate entity. The way that the pivot goes determines the way that the nation goes with respect to its freedom and prosperity.
Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)	In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). See the Doctrine of Rebound (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

⁴ From <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hapax+legomenon> accessed April 24, 2012.

Definition of Terms	
Reversionism	A state of being or a set of actions where a person reverts back to a former state, habit, belief, or practice of sinning. Reversionism is the status of the believer who fails to execute the plan of God for the Church Age. He returns to his pre-salvation <i>modus operandi</i> and <i>modus vivendi</i> .
Sin unto Death	The phrase "sin unto death" describes the final stage of divine discipline in which God removes from the earth the person who is totally alienated from God. The "sin unto death" is not a particular sin; but it is, rather, a mental attitude of total indifference to and rebellion against the will and purpose of God.
Spinoff	<p>These are believers who get sucked into the cosmic system (which is the thinking of Satan as over against the thinking of God). A great modern example of this are the civil rights protestors of the 50's and 60's, many of whom began as strong, Bible-believing Christians, but ended up as political and social activists. They achieved their political ends and lost their spiritual impact.</p> <p>A more up-to-date example would be those who have truly exercise faith in Jesus Christ, but then have gotten caught up in political or social action or attend a church which teaches liberation theology (or any other anti-Biblical organization).</p>
Syncretism	Syncretism is an attempt to reconcile or unite different or opposing principles, practices, or parties, as in philosophy or religion. When related to the Word of God, it is mixing evil, human viewpoint, and contemporary norms with Bible doctrine.
Syntheton	A syntheton [pronounced <i>SYN-the-ton</i>] is a figure of speech found in the Bible where two or more words are commonly combined, like <i>rich and poor, meat the drink, young and old</i> .
Theophany	A Theophany is an appearance by God, the Revealed Lord, before the incarnation of Jesus.
Three Stages of Spiritual Adulthood	<p>Stage 1: Person believes in Jesus Christ and is born again. This is a spiritual baby.</p> <p>Stage 2: Spiritual childhood, where a believer learns basic doctrines and learns what it is that he did when he believed in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Stage 3: Spiritual adulthood, where believers begin to understand divine viewpoint and to think like Jesus Christ. They understand their place in the world in the light of eternity. This is the stage at which the believer is most effective.</p>
<p>Some of these definitions are taken from</p> <p>http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml</p> <p>http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf</p> <p>http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d</p> <p>http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm</p> <p>http://www.realttime.net/~wdoud/topics.html</p> <p>http://www.theopedia.com/</p>	

Introduction: Chapter 18 contains the promise of the birth of Isaac to Sarah and it again has Abraham attempting to bail out his nephew, Lot. Abraham knows how to pray and prays to God concerning Sodom and Gomorrah in order to preserve Lot and his family.

After 13 quiet years, God appears to Abraham soon thereafter.

This ought to strike you as somewhat interesting: in the previous chapter, God made it clear that certain promises to Abraham were imminent—1 year in the future—and yet, there will be 3 chapters in between Genesis 17 and the fulfillment of Genesis 17. Two of those chapters will deal with great judgments upon the earth (particularly, upon Sodom and Gomorrah).

In Genesis 18, God will appear one more time to Abraham. It is now a month or so later, after God’s most recent promises to Abraham, which promises we studied in both Genesis 17 and Romans 4. See **Genesis 17** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

We know the time frame because God promised Abraham, in the previous chapter, that He would return to Abraham in a year’s time, and Abraham would have a son by Sarah; and in this chapter, Sarah is not even pregnant yet. Therefore, this chapter takes place less than 3 months after Genesis 17. It is also clear that Abraham has not yet been sexually revived, as vv. 12–13 reveal.

God has just promised Abraham that he would have a son by Sarah in one year (Genesis 17:21), so we would expect that we would see this fulfilled soon. That is not the case. We will not see the birth of Isaac until Genesis 21 and we have only begun Genesis 18. We have a lot to cover before we come to Isaac.

It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Genesis 18

Genesis 18 will begin with

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Genesis 18

Characters

Commentary

Y^ehowah

God the Son, in preincarnate form, appears again to Abraham. It seems that most or all of the time, God appears to Abraham as a man.

The two angels

Two angels travel with God and they will be given a twofold mission—the save Lot and his family and to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah where they live. In this chapter, they enjoy a meal with Abraham and seem to converse normally with him.

The Principals of Genesis 18

Characters	Commentary
Abraham	Abraham still does not appear to have been sexually regenerated, but this will occur in the very near future—probably within a week or so. He entertains his 3 guests, and then pleads for the life of Lot and his family.
Sarah	Sarah stays in the background, but is drawn into the conversation by Y ^e howah and the angels.

It is possible that Y^ehowah and the 3 angels represent the Trinity.

[Chapter Outline](#)
[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The Abrahamic Timeline for Genesis 18

Legend
Birth or death
God speaks with Abraham
Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)
Parentetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
2164 B.C.	0	1967 B.C.	Genesis 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 rd generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 <i>Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.</i>
Reese occasionally supplies 2 dates in his Chronological Bible; the first is his and the second is Klassen's.				
		1957 B.C.		Birth of Sarai
		1927 B.C.	Genesis 11:29–30	Marriage of Abram to Sarai
2089 B.C.	75	1892 B.C.	Genesis 12:1–4	Abraham leaves for Promised Land from Haran , after being so instructed by God. Gen 12:4 <i>So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.</i>

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
		1891 B.C. 1889 B.C. (Klassen)	Genesis 13:5–13	Abram and Lot separate from one another.
			Genesis 13:14–17	God renews His covenant with Abram.
		1884 B.C. 1888 B.C. ⁵ (Klassen)	Genesis 14:5–16	Lot is taken captive. Abram delivers Lot.
	85	1882 B.C. 1881 B.C. (Klassen)	Genesis 16:1–14	Sarah gives Hagar, her Egyptian slave girl, to Abram in order to sire a son. Gen 16:3 So Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan 10 years.
2078 B.C.	86	1881 B.C.	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.
(2065 B.C.)	99	1868 B.C.	Genesis 17:1–8	God renews His covenant with Abram and renames him Abraham. Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be devout.
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:9–14	Circumcision is given as a sign of the covenant and of Abraham's faith in his covenant with God. Circumcision represents regeneration (the new birth).
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:15–19	Sarai's name is changed to Sarah and Isaac, a future son, is promised the Abraham and Sarah. Gen 17:17 Abraham fell to the ground, laughed, and thought in his heart, "Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?"
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:20	Ishmael's destiny is foretold.

⁵ I had 1868 B.C.; I do not know if that is a typo on my part or if Klassen had a different order of events.

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:21–22	The time that Sarah would give birth is revealed; at a set time in the next year. Gen 17:21 But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at a set time next year.
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:23–27	Abraham obeys God and circumcises himself and the men with him, responding in faith to God's mandate. Gen 17:24 Abraham was 99 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised, and his son Ishmael was 13 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised.
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Genesis 18:1–15	Jehovah and two angels come to Abraham and promise that Sarah would have a child in a year's time. Gen 18:10, 14 The LORD said, "I will certainly come back to you in about a year's time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!" Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him. Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son.
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Genesis 18:16–21	The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is promised.
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Genesis 18:22–33	Abraham intercedes on behalf of Sodom.
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Genesis 19:1–29	The angels visit Lot and warn him of the coming destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed.

Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

From: http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf (Christian shepherd)

The Reese Chronological Bible; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 18 presents two very divergent topics but both occur on the same day and they involve the same people. Y^ehowah comes to Abraham with 2 others, and tells him again that his wife would give birth to a son, and that all of God’s promises would begin to be fulfilled, starting with this son. The last time, Abraham laughed when God made these promises (although it certainly appears that Abraham still believed God). In this chapter, Sarah will have a chance to laugh, and she will definitely manifest some doubt about this coming to pass.

The second half of this chapter is still Y^ehowah speaking with Abraham, however, this time the subject will change dramatically. Before, God was assuring Abraham that He would fulfill His many promises to him. Now, God will speak of Sodom and how Sodom is about to fall under great judgment. Then Abraham will feel bold enough to bargain with God. What if there are righteous (saved) men in Sodom? Will God simply destroy these people along with the wicked? And then we get to a numbers game. At what point will God continue to preserve the city-state of Sodom; and at what point will God determine that it be destroyed?

Here is what to expect from Genesis 18:

A Synopsis of Genesis 18

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 18 breaks down easily into two parts: in vv. 1–15, Sarah becomes aware of just how imminent the birth of Isaac is. In vv. 16–33, we will learn about intercessory prayer, blessing by association and the concept of the **pivot** (how believers in a particular country preserve that country).

There are going to be some remarkable differences in this chapter with regards to God appearing to Abraham. First of all, it is not clear at what point Abraham realizes that this is the Lord to Whom he is speaking. Secondly, God is there with two angels; which is a new thing. Thirdly, Sarah is involved in God’s promises to Abraham and engaged in the conversation. Finally, God arrives to pronounce judgment and to carry out this judgment. Abraham, through his prayer to God (face to face) will potentially have an affect upon another part of the world.

Chapter Updates:

I will use this space to indicate any format changes.

Every verse will be hyperlinked from the first page, so that you can easily go to a specific verse in this chapter.

At the end of the exegesis of every verse, I will make certain that there is a Kukis mostly literal translation and a Kukis paraphrase, both of them marked as such.

I have decided to add spacing between the translation and the commentary.

In the future, I would really like to add a few translations, fill in the translation of this chapter (at the end of this document); and provide additional sources at the end of this document.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Yehowah God and Two Angels Come to Abraham, to Reassert the Promises to Him

Slavishly literal:

And so is seen unto him Y^ehowah in Oaks of Mamre, and this one is sitting an opening of the tent as heat of the day.

Genesis
18:1

Moderately literal:

Y^ehowah appears unto Abraham [lit., *him*] by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day.

Kukis paraphrase:

Jehovah appeared to Abraham by the Oaks of Mamre while he was sitting at the opening of his tent in the heat of the day.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation⁶; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this

⁶ I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. Taken from <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/> and first published in 1862.

Targum of Onkelos	<u>AND the glory of the Lord was revealed to him in the valley of Mamre; and he, being ill from the pain of circumcision, sat at the door of the tabernacle in the fervour (or strength) of the day.</u>
Latin Vulgate	And the Lord appeared to him in the <u>vale</u> of Mambre as he was sitting <u>at</u> the door of his tent, <u>in</u> the very heat of the day.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so is seen unto him Y ^e howah in Oaks of Mamre, and this one is sitting an opening of the tent as heat of the day.
Peshitta (Syriac)	AND the LORD revealed himself to him by the <u>oak</u> of Mamre, as he was sitting <u>at</u> the door of the tent <u>in</u> the heat of the day.
Septuagint (Greek)	And God appeared to him by the <u>oak</u> of Mamre, as he sat <u>by</u> the door of his tent <u>in</u> the heat of the day.
Significant differences:	The targum inserts what appears to be commentary along side the translation; all of the excess words being underlined above. Although the word <i>oak</i> possibly means <i>plain</i> , <i>vale</i> ; it is in the plural in the Hebrew, it is in the singular in the Greek and appears to be in the singular in the other languages as well (according to their English translations).

Although you will note that I have *and* where many of the other ancient translations have *as*, the Hebrew exegesis will show that a temporal meaning can be affixed to the wâw conjunction.

The Hebrew does not have preposition preceding *door, opening*; but the sense of the verse seems to imply one. The final preposition, *in*, which seems to be the one used in nearly every English translation is actually the very similar looking kaph preposition. However, it has a temporal understanding, which appears to be what is meant here.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	One hot summer afternoon Abraham was sitting by the entrance to his tent near the sacred trees of Mamre, when the LORD appeared to him.
Easy English	The *Lord appeared in front of Abraham. It happened by the *oaks that Mamre owned. Abraham was sitting in the doorway of his tent. God appeared at midday, when the sun was very hot.
Easy-to-Read Version	Later, the Lord again appeared to Abraham. Abraham was living near the oak trees of Mamre. One day, at the hottest part of the day, Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent.
Good News Bible (TEV)	The LORD appeared to Abraham at the sacred trees of Mamre. As Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the hottest part of the day,...
New Life Bible	Abraham Is Promised A Son 1The Lord showed Himself to Abraham by the oak trees of Mamre, as he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	God [next] appeared to [AbraHam] by the big tree at MamRe, as he was sitting at the entrance to his tent, around noon.
Ancient Roots Translinear	Yahweh saw him at Mamre's oaks as he dwelled in the tent opening in the warmth of the day.
God's Word™	The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oak trees belonging to Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the hottest part of the day.
New American Bible	The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oak of Mamre, as he sat in the entrance of his tent, while the day was growing hot.
NIRV	Three Men Visit Abraham The Lord appeared to Abraham near the large trees of Mamre. Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent. It was the hottest time of the day.
New Simplified Bible	Jehovah appeared again to Abraham by the oak grove of Mamre. He was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Now the Lord came to him by the holy tree of Mamre, when he was seated in the doorway of his tent in the middle of the day;...
Complete Jewish Bible	ADONAI appeared to Avraham by the oaks of Mamre as he sat at the entrance to the tent during the heat of the day.

Ferar-Fenton Bible	The LORD again revealed to him at the Oakwood of Mamrah, when he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.
JPS (Tanakh—1917)	And the LORD appeared unto him by the terebinths of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	The LORD appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre; he was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot.
NET Bible®	Three Special Visitors The LORD appeared to Abraham [Heb "him"; the referent (Abraham) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] by the oaks [Or "terebinths."] of Mamre while [The disjunctive clause here is circumstantial to the main clause.] he was sitting at the entrance [The Hebrew noun translated "entrance" is an adverbial accusative of place.] to his tent during the hottest time of the day. When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote.
New Advent Bible	And the Lord appeared to him in the vale of Mambre as he was sitting at the door of his tent, in the very heat of the day.
NIV, ©2011	The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.
The Scriptures 1998	And הויה appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, while he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And appearing to him is Yahweh Elohim among the oaks of Mamre. And sitting is he at the opening of the tent at noon, as the day is warm.
exeGesés companion Bible	<u>THREE VISITORS</u> And Yah Veh is seen by him in the mighty oaks of Mamre: and he sits in the tent opening in the heat of the day;.
Modern KJV	And Jehovah appeared to him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day.
Syndein/Thieme	And Jehovah/God appeared unto him {Abraham} in the plains of Mamre {name means wealth and prosperity - implies he is in fellowship}. He {Abraham} sat in the tent door in the heat of the day {when the sun was high}.
Young's Updated LT	And Jehovah appears unto him among the oaks of Mamre, and he is sitting at the opening of the tent, about the heat of the day.

The gist of this verse: Abraham is sitting at the opening of his tent when it is warm and Y^ehowah appears to him.

Genesis 18:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
It is often typical for each sentence—in fact, each thought—to begin with a wâw consecutive (or a wâw conjunction) in the Hebrew. However, it is not necessary in an English translation to include a connective at every such juncture, as our language does not necessarily require that for successive thoughts or actions.			
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to be seen, to be visible; to let oneself be seen, to appear; to present oneself; to be provided [cared] for (i.e., looked after)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Although the bêyth preposition is primarily a preposition of proximity, it can also mean <i>in, among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; because of; by means of, about, concerning.</i>			
'êlôwn (אֵלֹנִים) [pronounced AY-lohn]	<i>oak, terebinth,⁷ tall tree, a strong and hardy tree; plain; hill?</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #436 BDB #18
Mam ^e rê' (מַמְרֵי) [pronounced mahm-RAY]	<i>strength; fatness; transliterated Mamre</i>	proper singular noun/location	Strong's #4471 BDB #577

Translation: [Y^ehowah appears unto him by the Oaks of Mamre...](#)

There are no chapter divisions in the original Hebrew, so the person here is Abraham (chapter 17 is simply continued here, even though this is a month or so later). Since Y^ehowah appeared to Abraham in the previous chapter and there was going to be a year pass before Isaac is born, vv. 12–13 indicate to us that nothing sexual has happened between Abraham and Sarah during this time. Therefore, God is appearing to Abraham and Sarah within 3 months of the previous appearance. Now, we know that God left Abraham because Genesis 17:12 tells

⁷ A *terebinth* is an anacardiaceous tree, which trees are found in the Mediterranean region.

us that **Y^ehowah completed talking to Abraham and then He went up from him**. So, there was 13 years of silence and now, within a 3 month period of time, God appears to Abraham twice.

I left off the transitional wâw consecutive in my translation, because the actual physical chapter division accomplishes the same thing.

Appeared is an interesting construction; this is the Niphal imperfect, 3rd person masculine singular of râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means *to see*. However, our Lord was not the one who *was seeing* but the one who *was seen*. This is why the passive voice is used here; effectively, this changes the meaning of the word from *to see* to *to appear*.

Mamre was one of the men who had helped Abraham back in Genesis 14 to route the kings. It is also the area that Abraham first settled in prior to this battle with the 4 kings. Genesis 13:18 tells us that this is in or near Hebron (both prepositions have the same root Hebrew word). My guess would be that Mamre was given the name by Mamre, who settled there before Abraham; or, Abraham picked up Mamre in Mamre and gave him that nickname.

Abraham has lived near the Oaks of Mamre since Genesis 13:18, a period of roughly 25 years. Being a rancher with probably a great many sheep, Abraham likely has traveled quite a bit with his sheep, probably in a circuit. However, this seems to be his primary residence, or home base, if you will.

You may recall that one of Abraham's allies in the War of the Kings was Mamre, who was an Amorite, who was an okay guy (we know this, because he chose to ally himself with Abraham). It is reasonable to understand that Mamre has allowed Abraham to live on his land and that this association has brought great blessing to Mamre.

Genesis 18:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
The wâw conjunction can be used to mean <i>at the same time, when, while, simultaneously</i> . ⁸			
hûw' (אוּה) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
yâshab (בָּשַׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH^BV</i>]	<i>inhabiting, staying, remaining, dwelling, sitting</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
pethach (פֶּתַח) [pronounced <i>PEH-thahkh</i>]	<i>opening, doorway, entrance, gate [for a tent, house, or city]; metaphorically, gate [of hope, of the mouth]</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6607 BDB #835

⁸ *At the same time* comes from *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 252; I added in the synonyms.

Genesis 18:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced OH-heh]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #168 BDB #13
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, just as; according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
The kaph preposition can be used of time, and translated <i>about, at; as, when, at the time of</i> . ⁹			
chôm (חֹם) [pronounced khohm]	<i>heat, hot, warm</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2527 BDB #328
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: ...while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day.

There are a few minor problems in translating this second phrase. However, the translation above is reasonable, and is justified by the Hebrew exegesis above.

My assumption here is, Abraham is taking a little siesta at this time. He is nearly 100 years old and he is taking some time off. However, bear in mind that Abraham will live to be 175 years old (Genesis 25:7). So, he is in a half-conscious state, and suddenly, there is Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form, standing in front of him. We studied this concept back in Genesis 16, as the **Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The following seem like reasonable information on the Preincarnate Christ.

Links to Doctrines on the Preincarnate Christ

YCF Adult Bible Fellowship Christology – The Study of Christ (this will open up a pdf in a separate window)
www.ffbc.net/index.php/download_file/738/80/

Valley Bible Church Theology Studies on the Preincarnate Christ
<http://www.valleybible.net/Adults/ClassNotes/TheologySurvey/Christ/PreincarnateChrist.pdf>

The Preincarnate Christ by CAS Ministries:
<http://www.angelfire.com/tx5/jeansptx/preinc.htm>

Come Meet Jesus Christ as Pre-Incarnte God by Louis Rushmore
<http://www.gospelgazette.com/gazette/2006/jun/page2.htm>

I cannot vouch for the rest of the information on their web pages, but these seem to be reasonably accurate.

⁹ As per *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 454.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

There is a revealed member of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, who reveals Himself to Abraham and to Moses (among many others). Usually, in the Old Testament, He is called the *Angel of Y^ehowah*.

As you view the remainder of this chapter, it will be clear that this verse—*Y^ehowah appears unto Abraham [lit., him] by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day*—is essentially a title or a summary of this chapter (at least, a summary of the first 15 verses).

This first verse appears to be a title for this chapter or a summary of this chapter. At the same time, it is a transitional verse from chapter 17 to chapter 18. The Bible was not separated into chapters (or even verses). However, you will recall that, by chiasm, Genesis 17 was clearly a separate literary unit. Therefore, this verse deftly moves us from chapter 17 to 18, and announces the content of Genesis 18.

It is the warm part of the day, and Abraham would be sitting outside of his tent to pick up whatever breeze he might. He is probably in a state of being partially asleep.

This narrative is going to be fascinating. We begin with the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect of *to appear* (it means *to see* in the Qal stem; *to appear, to be seen* in the Niphal). So, Y^ehowah, appears (masculine singular) to Abraham.

Let me remind you about God: God is One in essence, but three in Persons. Each member of the Godhead has a different function and a different relationship to us. The 2nd Member of the Trinity is Jesus Christ, known to Old Testament saints as Y^ehowah Elohim (although the name *Jesus* does appear in the Old Testament, hidden in one of the psalms). Y^ehowah Elohim is the Revealed Member of the Trinity, with Whom we directly interact. It is Jesus in Whom we must believe (John 14:1); and it was Y^ehowah in Whom Abraham believed in order to be seen as righteous (Genesis 15:6).

Genesis 18:1 *Y^ehowah appears unto Abraham [lit., him] by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:1 *Jehovah appeared to Abraham by the Oaks of Mamre while he was sitting at the opening of his tent in the heat of the day.* (Kukis paraphrase)

Gen 18:1 *And Y^ehowah appears to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.*

However, when Abraham looks up to see Y^ehowah, he sees 3 men.

V. 2 begins to describe the narrative of how this all came about—what the details were when Y^ehowah appeared to Abraham while he sat near the opening of his tent.

And so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks and, behold, three men are standing over him. And so he looks and so he runs to meet them from an opening of the tent. And so he bows down earthward,...

Genesis
18:2

Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up [lit., and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks] and, behold, [there are] three men standing beyond [over?] him. So he looks and then he runs to meet them from the opening of the tent. Then he bowed down toward the earth,...

Abraham looked up and suddenly saw three men over him. So he looks again and then he runs from his tent entrance to meet them. When he got to them, he then bowed down toward the earth,....

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, three angels in the resemblance of men were standing before him; (angels) who had been sent from the necessity of three things;--because it is not possible for a ministering angel to be sent for more than one purpose at a time;--one, then, had come to make known to him that Sarah should bear a man-child; one had come to deliver Lot; and one to overthrow Sedom and Amarah. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the door of the tent, and bowed himself on the earth. [JERUSALEM. Three angels were sent to our father Abraham; and the three were sent for three things;--because it is not possible that one of the high angels should be sent for more things than one. The first angel was sent to announce to our father Abraham, that, behold, Sarah would bear Izhak; the second angel was sent to deliver Lot from the midst of the overthrow; the third angel was sent to overthrow Sedom and Amarah, Admah and Zeboim. Therefore was there a word of prophecy from before the Lord unto Abraham the Just, and the Word of the Lord was revealed to him in the valley of vision; and he sat in the door of the tabernacle, comforting himself from his circumcision in the fervour (or strength) of the day.]

Latin Vulgate

And when he had lifted up his eyes, there appeared to him three men standing near to him: and as soon as he saw them, he ran to meet them from the door of his tent, and adored down to the ground.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks and, behold, three men are standing over him. And so he looks and so he runs to meet them from an opening of the tent. And so he bows down earthward,...

Peshitta (Syriac)

And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, three men stood at a distance from him; and when he saw them, he ran from the door of the tent to meet them and bowed himself to the ground,...

Septuagint (Greek)

And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood before him; and having seen them, he ran to meet them from the door of his tent, and bowed himself to the ground.

Significant differences:

Again, the targum is filled with a discussion of what this verse is all about; all of that has been underlined.

Although the English translation from the Latin reads *and when*, this is not a bad translation from the Hebrew. The Latin appears to be missing *and looked*.

However, they present this verb as a Niphal or Hiphil (based upon the English translation).

Where the men are standing in relationship to Abraham is a difficult call and will be discussed in the exegesis below. Therefore, the differences here are probably related more to the understanding of what is being said rather than to the actual words found in the Hebrew.

The verb *to see* occurs twice. The Latin seems to present this with a temporal understanding. The Greek presents it as a passive participle. All ancient versions append the verb with the 3rd person masculine plural suffix (based upon the English translations above—and the same is true for many English translations).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	He looked up and suddenly saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from his tent entrance to greet them and bowed deeply.
Contemporary English V.	Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. He quickly ran to meet them, bowed with his face to the ground,...
Easy English	Abraham looked up. And he saw three men, who were standing near him. Immediately he ran from the door of his tent. He ran towards them. He *bowed very low.
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham looked up and saw three men standing in front of him. When Abraham saw the men, he ran to them and bowed before them.
Good News Bible (TEV)	...he looked up and saw three men standing there. As soon as he saw them, he ran out to meet them. Bowing down with his face touching the ground,...
<i>The Message</i>	He looked up and saw three men standing. He ran from his tent to greet them and bowed before them.
New Life Bible	Abraham looked up and saw three men standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them. He put his face to the ground...
New Living Translation	He looked up and noticed three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran to meet them and welcomed them, bowing low to the ground.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	He looked up and saw three men before him. And when he noticed them, he ran from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed all the way to the ground.
Beck's American Translation	He looked up, and there he saw three men standing not far from him. When he saw them, he ran from his tent door to meet them, and he bowed down to the ground.
<i>God's Word</i> TM	Abraham looked up, and suddenly he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them, and he bowed with his face touching the ground.
New American Bible	Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them; and bowing to the ground,...
New Jerusalem Bible	He looked up, and there he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them, and bowed to the ground.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And lifting up his eyes, he saw three men before him; and seeing them, he went quickly to them from the door of the tent, and went down on his face to the earth;...
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then he raised his eyes and looked, and saw three men standing opposite to him; and he looked, and called to them from the door of his tent, and bowing to the ground,...
HCSB	He looked up, and he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them and bowed to the ground.
JPS (Tanakh—1917)	...and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed down to the earth,...
NET Bible®	Abraham ["he"; the referent (Abraham) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] looked up [Heb "lifted up his eyes."] and saw [Heb "and saw, and look." The particle הִנֵּה (hinneh) draws attention to what he saw. The drawn-out description focuses the reader's attention on Abraham's deliberate, fixed gaze and indicates that what he is seeing is significant.] three men standing across [The Hebrew preposition לַע ('al) indicates the three men were nearby, but not close by, for Abraham had to run to meet them.] from him. When he saw them [The pronoun "them" has been supplied in the translation for clarification. In the Hebrew text the verb has no stated object.] he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them and bowed low [The form וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (vayyishtakhu, "and bowed low") is from the verb הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה (hishtakhavah, "to worship, bow low to the ground"). It is probably from a root חָוָה (khavah), though some derive it from שָׁחָה (shakhah).] to the ground [The reader knows this is a theophany. The three visitors are probably the LORD and two angels (see Genesis 19:1). It is not certain how soon Abraham recognized the true identity of the visitors. His actions suggest he suspected this was something out of the ordinary, though it is possible that his lavish treatment of the visitors was done quite unwittingly. Bowing down to the ground would be reserved for obeisance of kings or worship of the LORD. Whether he was aware of it or not, Abraham's action was most appropriate.].
NIV – UK	Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood at a little distance from him. He ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the ground.
Concordant Literal Version	And lifting is he his eyes and seeing, and behold! Three mortals are stationed by him. And seeing is he and running to meet them from the opening of the tent, and is prostrating to the earth.
Context Group Version	...and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and noticed three men stood across from him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the land { or earth },...
English Standard Version	He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth...
exeGesés companion Bible	...and he lifts his eyes and sees, and behold, three men station themselves by him: and he sees them and runs to meet them from the tent opening

Heritage Bible	and prostrates himself toward the earth,... And he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and lo, three men were stationed by him; and when he saw, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and prostrated himself upon the earth,...
Modern KJV	And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed toward the ground.
Syndein	{Verses 2-8: A Believer In Fellowship - Is Friendly and Hospitable} He kept on lifting up {nasa'} his eyes and 'looking to understand' {ra'ah}, and, lo, three men stood in front of him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed {shachah - used for 'to prostrate oneself '- here is a gracious greeting to strangers} himself toward the ground.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	...and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and noticed three men stood across from him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth,...
Webster's Bible Translation	And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw [them], he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.
World English Bible	He lifted up his eyes and looked, and saw that three men stood opposite him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth,...
Young's Updated LT	And he lifts up his eyes and looks, and lo, three men standing by him, and he sees, and runs to meet them from the opening of the tent, and bows himself towards the earth.

The gist of this verse: Three men come to Abraham, while he is sleeping in front of his tent, and he runs to them, bowing before them.

Genesis 17:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

The chief function of the wâw consecutive is to mark the continuation of a piece of narrative or discourse over at least one but more often several stages. The sequence they establish is essentially chronological, though not necessarily one of strict succession. This sequence of frequently logical as well.¹⁰ It is also common for wâw consecutive to link together a series of imperfect tense verbs. What is being emphasized is a chronological are logical narrative rather than continuous action.¹¹ When dealing with a narrative of chronological succession, it may be reasonable to translate the wâw consecutive *later, afterward, subsequently*.

¹⁰ This is quoted almost verbatim from J.C.L. Gibson, *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar~Syntax*; 4th Edition, © T&T Clark Ltd., 1994, pp. 83–84.

¹¹ I said that; I am not certain if other Hebrew translators have.

Genesis 17:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i>]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
'êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i>]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

Owen calls this a feminine plural noun; and Gesenius indicates that the dual is used for the plural.

Translation: [Abraham lifts up his eyes...](#)

I have suggested that Abraham is taking a siesta at this point. Rather than translating this with a 3rd person masculine singular pronoun, many translators, including myself, use Abraham's name, simply because it sounds better. This is understood in the Hebrew text because there is no break between chapters 17 and 18, so the narrative about Abraham is considered to simply continue.

V. 1 tells us that this is the Lord, although it is not clear whether Abraham knows that or not. This is likely Jesus and two angels coming to Abraham at this momentous time. We can be fairly certain that one of them at least is Y^ehowah, the One who is revealed. Vv. 19 and 13 indicate this.

Genesis 18:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

Translation: [...and looks](#) [lit., *and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks*]...

Perhaps Abraham is in a deep sleep and perhaps not. He looks up, which seems to be the meaning of these verbs strung together.

Genesis 18:2c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
sh ^e lôshâh (שְׁלֹשָׁה) [pronounced <i>shiloh-SHAW</i>]	<i>a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome</i>	feminine singular numeral	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025
'ênôwsh (אֲנוּשׁ) [pronounced <i>en-OHSH</i>]	<i>mortal, mortal man, mankind; fallen man, depraved man, feeble man [liable to disease and calamity]; peons, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #582 BDB #60

When this word is used for man, the emphasis is either a reference to man in his fallen state (the emphasis does not have to be upon sin; it can be upon man's fragility and mortal nature) or upon the lower classes of man, *the peons, peasants, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble*.

However, in times like this, the reference is to angels. My educated guess here is, they have taken upon the form of mortal man. To anyone else, they could not be distinguished from mortal men.

Translation: ...and, behold, [there are] three men...

What Abraham sees is three men. Now, the use of this particular word for *men* suggests that there is nothing special about them. That is, none of them have horns or wings or whatever; they simply appear to be normal men.

The questions which occur to me immediately is, *who are these men* and *who does Abram think that they are?*

Their appearance here seems somewhat sudden—Abraham looks up, and right in front of him are 3 men. In fact, the Hebrew reads that these 3 men are *stationed [standing] over* him. However, that is probably not how your Bible reads. In this verse, we have the masculine plural, Niphal participle of *nâtsab* (נָצַב) [pronounced *naw-TSAH^BV*], which means, *those stationed, the ones left standing, stationing themselves, who are taking a stand; those standing [at the ready]*. Strong's #5324 BDB #662. This is followed by the preposition 'al (אֲל) [pronounced *gah*], which means, *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of*. Strong's #5921 BDB #752. It is affixed to the 3rd person masculine singular suffix, which refers to Abraham.

In the previous verse, we are told that Y^ehowah appears to Abraham; yet, in this verse, he sees 3 men standing over him.

What is being illustrated for us here is the Trinity. These men are not the 3 members of the Trinity taking on physical form and coming to Abram; this could be Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form (He is the revealed

member of the Trinity) with 2 angels (say, Michael and Gabriel). What we know for certain is, Jehovah Elohim is among them. That this is Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form traveling with two angels, which explanation will become clear as we continue in this narrative.

I have taken some liberties with this verse (not as much as most translators have), but very literally, this verse reads: **And so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks and, behold, three men are standing over him. And so he looks and so he runs to meet them from an opening of the tent. And so he bows down earthward,...** You will note that we have a repetition of the wâw consecutive and the verb *he looks*.

Let me explain something from the Hebrew, which is not fully understood or even correctly taught in many Hebrew classes: when you have a bunch of wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, you are reading a chronological or logical progression of action, without reference to the duration or the completion of the action itself. Here are the two ways that translators have gotten this wrong: traditionally, it is incorrectly taught that a wâw would transform an imperfect verb (continuous or progressive action) into a perfect verb (completed action). It is called a wâw conversative. Teachers teach this because, much of this action which should be seen as continuous simply isn't. R. B. Thieme, Jr. made mention, from time to time, of the wâw conversative, but, most of the time, seemed to reject that notion (although I do not recall him actually saying that), and took every imperfect verb and made it into continuous action. So, traditional Hebrew scholars render this: **And he lifted up his eyes and he looked,...** R. B. Thieme, Jr. would render this: **And he keeps on lifting up his eyes and he keeps on looking,...** However, the key is not the English tense of the verb, but the chronological progression of these actions, which actions may occur in a moment or which actions may occur over a lengthier period of time. However, what should focus on is the progression: **And then he lifted up his eyes; and then he looked, and, behold, [there are] three men standing over him. And then he looked and then he ran to meet them [running] from the opening of the tent. And then he bowed down low [before them].** I know that this was quite technical, and you may not get it; but, because this is not understood by most translators, some have fudged the translation of this verse. The Hebrew clearly says that these men are standing over Abraham; and yet, he runs to meet them. That doesn't make any sense, so the words *standing over* are changed by some translators to make it sound like these 3 men are off in the distance. The NET Bible, for instance, renders this: **Abraham looked up and saw three men standing across from him.** It takes 4 footnotes for them to explain their translation of this one short phrase.

What pulls this all together is, Abraham looks twice. The first time he looks, they are standing over him; the second time he looks, they are, apparently, off a ways from him.

All three look just like men; there is nothing suggested in this context that they had wings or were translucent or anything else. All Abraham sees is just three men. We will find out that this is Jehovah Elohim and two angels (compare Genesis 18:1–2, 16, 22 and 19:1).

Genesis 18:2d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced naw-TSAH ^B V]	<i>those stationed, the ones left standing, stationing themselves, who are taking a stand; those standing [at the ready]; deputies, prefects</i>	masculine plural, Niphal participle	Strong's #5324 BDB #662

Genesis 18:2d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
‘al (אֲל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

BDB gives the following meanings for this verb: 1) *upon, on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, beside, in addition to, together with, beyond, above, over, by, on to, towards, to, against (preposition); 1a) upon, on the ground of, on the basis of, on account of, because of, therefore, on behalf of, for the sake of, for, with, in spite of, notwithstanding, concerning, in the matter of, as regards; 1b) above, beyond, over (of excess); 1c) above, over (of elevation or pre-eminence); 1d) upon, to, over to, unto, in addition to, together with, with (of addition); 1e) over (of suspension or extension); 1f) by, adjoining, next, at, over, around (of contiguity or proximity); 1g) down upon, upon, on, from, up upon, up to, towards, over towards, to, against (with verbs of motion); 1h) to (as a dative); 2) because that, because, notwithstanding, although (conjunction).*

Translation: ...standing beyond [over?] him.

This is actually a fairly difficult phrase, not because the words themselves are difficult (they are very common Hebrew words), but because we normally associate the preposition with being *upon, against, above, over* when it comes to the relative position of two sets of things (in this case, Abraham and the 3 men). If we were to understand this as Abraham sitting outside of his tent opening on a lawn chair (or, whatever), in a half-conscious state, and there are 3 men standing over him, then these words perfectly fit with this scenario. Because Abraham will run to meet these men, they would not appear to be so close to him.

BDB gives the following meanings for this preposition: 1) *upon, on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, beside, in addition to, together with, beyond, above, over, by, on to, towards, to, against (preposition); 1a) upon, on the ground of, on the basis of, on account of, because of, therefore, on behalf of, for the sake of, for, with, in spite of, notwithstanding, concerning, in the matter of, as regards; 1b) above, beyond, over (of excess); 1c) above, over (of elevation or pre-eminence); 1d) upon, to, over to, unto, in addition to, together with, with (of addition); 1e) over (of suspension or extension); 1f) by, adjoining, next, at, over, around (of contiguity or proximity); 1g) down upon, upon, on, from, up upon, up to, towards, over towards, to, against (with verbs of motion); 1h) to (as a dative); 2) because that, because, notwithstanding, although (conjunction).* I mention this, because in all cases where relative juxtaposition of two objects or two sets of things tend to imply both a nearness and the idea that one set of things is over another set. So, these three men standing over Abraham, while Abraham is half asleep in his lawn chair out on the front lawn is a very reasonable understanding.

Now, it may strike you as odd for God and two angels to be walking, but the earth, created by God, is a marvelous place. The design of the earth, its plant life and animal life, and mankind, and the actual composition of the earth and its atmosphere is absolutely amazing. So, it should not seem odd that God would allow these angels with Him to enjoy walking upon the earth and taking in all of its great beauty, even in its fallen state (Genesis 3:17–18).

In fact, the earth is such an incredible place that man has worshiped the earth throughout much of human history. Looking back, it is called Gaia worship; today, it is known as *rabid environmentalism* (or, *environmentalism* for short). A distinction ought to be made. God has placed man on this earth to inhabit it and to make the environment what we want it to be. That is, we adapt the environment and use the earth for our own purposes and design. For many of us, that is a house surrounded by a slightly larger lawn, with roads that will take us to stores. It becomes environmentalism when (1) you are so offended by the aesthetics of your surroundings that you want to not just change the way you live, but the way others live as well; and/or (2) you believe that man is destructive to the earth, and that we ought to strive for the earth to be what it is, as if man never existed.

This does not mean that wanting clean air to breathe and clean water to drink are radical notions. That does not mean that, you prefer a wild landscape, and you want to live in a house surrounded by forest (or, whatever). It is even okay if you think your lawn ought to grow wild and never be mowed—just find a place where you can do that without having to spend the rest of your life in court. We are allowed to adapt the earth for our living desires.

Quite obviously, since we are not the only people on this earth, our designs and choices are limited by the respect for others. If you live in a neighborhood, like it or not, there are community standards. Or, if you live along a river, you cannot simply throw your garbage into the river to get rid of it, since, quite obviously, someone else lives down-river from you. Rom 12:18 (WEB) *If it is possible, as much as it is up to you, be at peace with all men.* Hebrews 12:14a (BBE) *Let your desire be for peace with all men.*

Genesis 18:2e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

Translation: [So he looks...](#)

We repeat this verb, in exactly the same stem and tense. Although we do not have the qualifier *again*, it would not be out of order to understand this to mean *and he looks again*. This is simply based upon the repetition of the verb.

Let me suggest this as one possible explanation. Abraham looks up, out of a half-conscious sleep, and he sees 3 men standing over him or standing by him. He dozes off for a few instances, his mind snaps to what he saw, and he looks again. This time, the men are no longer standing over him, but they are a distance off. Now, quite frankly, there is not enough information in this verse for me to give this interpretation only; but it does reasonably take into account all that we find here without having to fudge the meanings of the words (and, by *fudge*, and I don't mean *fudge*, but to take a less-used definition for this or that word). It is not unusual in English to use a particular word in a particular way almost all of the time; and yet, to use this word in a slightly different sense once or twice in your lifetime.

So far, v. 2 reads: **Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up** [lit., *and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks*] **and, behold, [there are] three men standing beyond [over?] him. So he looks...** Two of these *men* are angels; so let's talk about angels for a moment:

77% of adult Americans believe in angels, according to a **December 2011 Associated Press-GfK poll**. I must admit this surprised me; but it is also good to know, in general, that 77% of adult Americans believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, according to a 2012 **Rasmussen poll**.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Angels (Angelology)

1. As previously discussed, these are 2 angels who have come with our Lord to Abraham. However, it is not clear at this point that Abraham knows that this is Jehovah Elohim or that these are angels. Their purpose seems to be tied more to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah than it is to meeting Abraham. Genesis 18:1–2, 16, 22 19:1, 12–13
2. Our word for *angel* is a transliteration from the Greek word *aggelos* (ἄγγελος) [pronounced *AHN-geh-loss*], which means *messenger, envoy, one who is sent, angel, a messenger from God*. Strong's #32. Although this word is often translated *angel* (Matthew 2:19 28:2, 5 Luke 1:13–19 2:9–10), it is not used exclusively for *angels* (Matthew 11:10).
3. The existence of angels is clearly taught in the Bible, as they are found over 100 times in the Old Testament alone. However, this did not mean that people encountered angels all of the time. In Genesis 6, apparently every person had some kind of contact with fallen angels; but after that point, their appearance to man was rare; and since the completion of the canon of Scripture, it is not clear that any contact is allowed between man and angels.
4. Angels were created before man; and man is clearly inferior to angels (although this, apparently, will change). Psalm 148:2–5 Hebrews 2:6–9 2Peter 2:11
5. There are both fallen and elect angels. Elect angels have never sinned; fallen angels have followed Satan (which is about a third of the angels—Revelation 12:4). Fallen angels are also called demons in Scripture. Psalm 103:20 Matthew 24:41 Mark 8:38 2Corinthians 12:7 Jude 6 Revelation 12:7–12
6. Although I have heard discussion by many theologians about the redemption of angels, I have not come across any evidence that an angel can sin against God and then later be redeemed.
7. Angels apparently have an ability to adopt a physical, human form which functions just as our bodies function. They are able to eat, they are able to grab, and, in the case of Genesis 6, able to copulate with and impregnate human women. Genesis 6 18:8 19:16 Hebrews 13:2
8. However, angels appear to have bodies of light which are not governed by the same laws of physics that we are. Daniel 9:21 10:5–6 Matthew 28:2–4 Colossians 1:16 Hebrews 1:7, 14
9. Although angels are powerful beings, they cannot stand between you and God; they cannot take your salvation from you. Romans 8:38
10. We appear to be an object lesson for angels, who spend much of their time observing mankind. Eccl 5:6 Daniel 4:13, 17, 23 1Cor 4:9 Eph 3:10 1Timothy 5:21 Hebrews 12:1. This is not too different from our obsession with watching movies.

Some of this material came from:

Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. 7, pp. 13–15.

Robert Dean's Notes, **Genesis Lesson #98**, 7/19/2005; accessed April 17, 2012.

<http://christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-t005.html> accessed April 17, 2012.

For additional study, try:

<http://ichthys.com/2A-Angelo.htm>

<http://biblestudyplanet.com/angels-and-demons/>

<http://bible.org/article/angelology-doctrine-angels>

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/angels.html>

As an aside, I mention the poll about believing that Christ rose from the dead, because this is directly related to our preservation as a nation; one of the lessons that we will learn in Genesis 18.

Chapter Outline

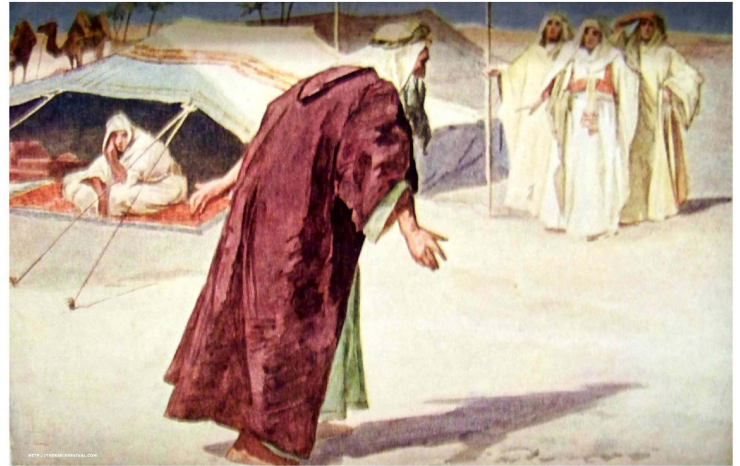
Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 18:2f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
rûts (רוץ) [pronounced roots]	<i>to run, to hasten to; to move quickly [and with purpose]; to rush upon [in a hostile manner]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7323 BDB #930
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (אָרַק) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
pethach (פֶּתַח) [pronounced PEH-thahkh]	<i>opening, doorway, entrance, gate [for a tent, house, or city]; metaphorically, gate [of hope, of the mouth]</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6607 BDB #835
'ohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced OH-hel]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #168 BDB #13

Translation: ...and then he runs to meet them from the opening of the tent.

It appears as if these men are afar off. Therefore, Abraham has to get onto his feet and run to them. Given the words in this verse and how they are used, this does not preclude a semi-conscious state. That is, it is almost as if Abraham is experiencing this in a dream. First the men are right there over him; and then he is running to them, with twice the allusion to the entry to the tent. However, it will become clear that this is not a vision or a dream because Sarah will hear what is being said. She will actually hear them say things.



Abraham entertaining angels (a graphic); from Stakla.org; accessed January 1, 2014.

Genesis 18:2g			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâchah (שָׁחָה) [pronounced shaw-KHAW]	to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to; to honor [with prayers]; to do homage to, to submit to	3 rd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #7812 BDB #1005
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]	feminine singular noun with the directional hê	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: Then he bowed down toward the earth,...

It is not clear whether Abraham is acting with great humility toward 3 strangers who are within his periphery or whether he recognizes who this is. Even calling one of these men, *my lord* does not require Abraham to have recognized one of the men as Jehovah Elohim.

Genesis 18:2 Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up [lit., and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks] and, behold, [there are] three men standing beyond [over?] him. So he looks and then he runs to meet them from the opening of the tent. Then he bowed down toward the earth,... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:2 Abraham looked up and suddenly saw three men over him. So he looks again and then he runs from his tent entrance to meet them. When he got to them, he then bowed down toward the earth,.... (Kukis paraphrase)

Gen 18:1–2 And Y^ehowah appears to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing over him. When he looked [again], he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth

Let me suggest this explanation. Abraham looks up, out from a half-conscious sleep, and he sees 3 men standing over him or standing by him. He dozes off for a few instances, his mind snaps to what he saw, and he looks again. This time, the men are no longer standing over him, but they are a distance off.

Abraham runs to meet them and he bows himself before them.

...and so he says, “My Lords, if please I have found grace in Your eyes do not please pass from upon Your servant.

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18:3

...and said, “My Lords, if indeed I have found grace in Your eyes, please do not pass away from Your servant.

...and said, “My Lords, if I have indeed found grace in Your sight, then please do not pass away from Your servant.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And he said, I beseech, <u>by the mercies (that are) before You</u> , O Lord, if now I have found favour before You, that <u>the glory of Your shekina</u> may not now ascend from Your servant, <u>until I have set forth provisions under the tree</u> .
Latin Vulgate	And he said: Lord, if I have found favour in your sight, pass not away from your servant.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	...and so he says, “My Lords, if please I have found grace in Your eyes do not please pass from upon Your servant.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And said, O LORD, if <u>now</u> I have found mercy in your sight, do not pass away from your servant.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said, Lord, if <u>indeed</u> I have found grace in Your sight, pass not by Your servant.

Significant differences: The targum is filled will extra stuff. You will note that my translation has *My Lords*, and the others are somewhat different. See the Hebrew exegesis for more information on that.

The Latin lacks the particle of entreaty (which occurs twice in the Hebrew). The translations *if now* and *if indeed* (in the Syriac and Greek) are legitimate (as is, *in Your sight*). .

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	He said, "Sirs, if you would be so kind, don't just pass by your servant.
Contemporary English V.	...and said, "Please come to my home where I can serve you.
Easy English	Abraham said, `Sir, if you think kindly about me, please do not go away.
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham said, "Sirs [This Hebrew word can mean "sirs" or "Lord." This might show that these were not ordinary men.], please stay awhile with me, your servant.
Good News Bible (TEV)	...he said, "Sirs, please do not pass by my home without stopping; I am here to serve you.
<i>The Message</i>	He said, "Master, if it please you, stop for a while with your servant.
New Century Version	...and said, "Sir, if you think well of me, please stay awhile with me, your servant.
New Living Translation	"My lord," he said, "if it pleases you, stop here for a while.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	...saying, "My lord, please, if I find grace in your eyes, please do not pass by your servant.
Beck's American Translation	"my lord," he said, "if you're kind to me, please don't pass by your servant.
<i>God's Word</i> ™	"Please, sir," Abraham said, "stop by to visit me for a while.
New American Bible	...he said: "Sir,* if it please you, do not go on past your servant.
NIRV	He said, "My lord, if you are pleased with me, don't pass me by.
Revised English Bible	...he said, 'Sirs, if I have deserved your favour, do not go past your servant without a visit.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And said, My Lord, if now I have grace in your eyes, do not go away from your servant:...
Complete Jewish Bible	...and said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, please don't leave your servant.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...said, "My masters, if now I have found favour in your eyes, will you not come in to your servant?
HCSB	Then he said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, please do not go on past your servant.
PS (Tanakh—1985)	...he said, "My lords [Or, "My Lord"], if it please you, do not go on past your servant.
NET Bible®	He said, "My lord [The Masoretic Text (MT) has the form אֲדֹנָי ('adonay, "Master") which is reserved for God. This may reflect later scribal activity. The scribes, knowing it was the LORD, may have put the proper pointing with the word instead of the more common אֲדֹנִי ('adoni, "my master").], if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by and leave your servant [Heb "do not pass by from upon your servant."].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And saying is he, "My lord, pray, should I find grace in your eyes, pray, you must not pass on from your servant.
Context Group Version	...and said, My lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, don't pass away, I beg of you, from your slave...
English Standard Version	...and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and says, My Adonay, If, I beseech you,

	I find charism in your eyes, pass not away, I beseech you, from your servant:
Heritage Bible	And said, My Lord, if now there exists grace to me in your eyes, I beg you, do not cross on from your servant;...
NASB	...and said, "My Lord [Or O Lord], if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by [Lit pass away from Your servant].
Syndein	And said, "Why don't you stay awhile?" {Idiom: literally is "my 'Adonay/lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away, I pray you, from your servant"} {Note: RBT says that Abraham did not recognize these three strangers as being God or messengers from God at this point. The point of the verses is to show Abraham's good mental attitude when the strangers arrived.}
Updated Bible Version 2.11	...and said, My lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, don't pass away, I pray you, from your slave:.
World English Bible	...and said, "My lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, please don't go away from your servant..
Young's Updated LT	And he says, "My Lord, if, I pray you, I have found grace in your eyes, do not, I pray you, pass on from your servant.

The gist of this verse: Abraham asks for them to not pass by him.

Genesis 18:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
There are actually 3 forms of this word: ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]; ʾădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]; and ʾădônîy (אֲדֹנֵי) [pronounced uh-doh-NEE].			
This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יִם) [pronounced eem], an older form of the <i>pluralis excellentiæ</i> (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1 st person singular suffix, hence, <i>my Lord</i> (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from <i>my lords</i>).			

Genesis 18:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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There are points of grammar which speak to the options above, but not so that we may unequivocally choose between the three. (1) When we find ʾădônay (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAH*] (note the difference of the vowel ending), it always means *my lords*. (2) Jehovah calls Himself ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*] in Job 28:28 Isaiah 8:7; however, many of the Job manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* and 8 ancient Isaiah manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* instead. This suggests, that either ancient Scribes were confused about this form of *Adonai* or that they simply substituted *Adonai* for *Y^ehowah*, which was not an abnormal practice (in oral readings, the ancient Tetragrammaton was not spoken, but *Lord* was said instead). And even if every manuscript read *Adonai*, then we may also reasonably conclude that one member of the Trinity is addressing another member of the Trinity (although the idea of God saying *my Lord* would be theologically confusing, even if addressing another member of the Trinity; although Jesus did refer to God the Father as *our Father*).

Translation: ...and said, “My Lords,...

The word *Lord* here can refer to God and can be a term of simple respect for a man in authority. The form that this word is in is, ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]. Grammatically speaking, this is the plural form of ʾădôwn (אֲדֹוּן) [pronounced *aw-DOHN*] with the 1st person singular suffix affixed to it. Most English Bibles translate this *my Lord* here and *my lords* in Genesis 19:2, even though this is the exact same form of the word and Abram is addressing 3 men and Lot will address 2 messengers when they come to him (God will not be with them). It is not unusual for this to be simply translated *Lord*. To add to this confusion, Strong gives 2 numbers to this word (Strong's #113 & 136), which merely represent these 2 forms of the same word. And, as if that were not confusing enough, my e-sword identifies the word here as Strong's #136 and as Strong's #113 in Genesis 19:2, even though they are the exact same form of the exact same word. I am not opposed in any way to the different Strong numbers, which is often the case when, say, the present active participle of a verb is separately named as an adjective; however, it strikes me as being rather inconsistent to take these 2 instances of having the exact same word in all respects given 2 different Strong's numbers.

I mention this bit of confusion, because it would be easy to use your **e-sword** (or a similar type tool) and to think that the Hebrew word here is ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*] but in Genesis 19:2, the Hebrew word is ʾădôwn (אֲדֹוּן) [pronounced *aw-DOHN*]. Both BDB and Gesenius combine these “two” Strong's numbers under one grouping. Strong differentiates between them. But, we have exactly the same form and spelling of the same word in Genesis 18:3 and 19:2, even though Strong treats them as different words.

The reason the narrative begins with Abraham seeing three men is because Abraham did not realize who this was at first. What he was doing was being polite. *Lord* here is the masculine plural with a 1st person singular suffix of the Hebrew word ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*] is a term of respect and it can refer to God or to a person. *My Lords* is a good translation as long as it is not confused and thought to be a divine reference. *Sirs* would be another good translation here. Abraham is ingratiating himself to these strangers and is assuming the best of them. Abraham is merely providing them with some southern hospitality.

So, Abraham literally says, “My lords;” although it is not out of the question to render this *O Lord* or *my Lord*, despite the plural and the suffix. This sort of vocative simply connotes respect and does not necessarily mean that it is a reference to deity every time it is used (see 1Samuel 25:31, for instance). However, for the Pentateuch, Joshua and Judges, this word is used exclusively for Deity (this being the lone questionable example).

The narrative here tells us that YHWH is appearing to Abram. However, in vv. 2–3, it is not clear that Abraham knows who these men are. This could simply be ancient world hospitality that Abraham is practicing here. He sees these men off in the distance, and he gets up and runs to them, and then bows before them, asking if he can refresh them.

There are definitely some difficult things to explain from the Hebrew. Most of the time, when we find this word, we translate it *Lord* or *my Lord*; however, it is in the plural and Abraham is speaking to 3 people (well, sort of). What follows is, Abraham will twice use the 2nd person masculine singular suffix, rather than the plural. So, is he speaking to 3 men (or, whatever) or is he speaking to one of them in particular?

Please note what we have so far, when it comes to the number of people that Abraham is speaking to.

Is Abraham Speaking to One Lord or to Three?

First thing is, I will **bold** all of the references to Abraham's visitor in the singular (verbs in the singular are also marked).

Then **Y^ehowah appears** unto him by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day. Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up [lit., *and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks*] and, behold, [there are] three men standing beyond [over?] him. So he looks and then he runs to meet them from the opening of the tent. Then he bowed down toward the earth, and said, "My Lords, if indeed I have found grace in **Your** eyes, please do not **pass** away from **Your** servant.

Now, let's go back and see where Abraham is speaking to 3 beings:

Then Y^ehowah appears unto him by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day. Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up [lit., *and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks*] and, behold, [there are] **three men standing** over him. So he looks and then he runs to meet **them** from the opening of the tent. Then he bowed down toward the earth, and said, "My **Lords**, if indeed I have found grace in Your eyes, please do not pass away from Your servant.

Bear in mind, the very words *my Lords* is in question when it comes to how it ought to be translated.

Do you see how intermixed this is? Even within Abraham's quote, he addresses the 3 but then speaks to Y^ehowah in particular.

What appears to be the case is, there is the Lord, in His preincarnate form; and He is with 2 angels. Abraham speaks specifically to the 2nd Person of the Trinity.

However, what seems to be implied here—and this has occurred already—is the question, is God One or is God Three? God is One is essence and in purpose; God is Three in Persons. You will note that even the verbs are alternately singular and plural.

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My point here is, this is consistent with speaking of God as a Trinity, a Unified Whole, yet in three Persons. Again, this is not the Trinity appearing to Abraham; this is simply illustrative of the Trinity.

Genesis 18:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
The particle ʾîm (אִם) can be used as a demonstrative (<i>lo, behold</i>), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (<i>if, though</i>); an indication of a wish or desire (<i>oh that, if only</i> ; this is a rare usage).			
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: “ Oh, that I may not respect any man's person ”); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2 nd person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Genesis 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Genesis 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Genesis 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word <i>let</i> .			
Together, ʾîm nâ' (אִם נָא) [pronounced eem-naw] mean <i>if indeed, if now</i> ; used in modestly, even timidly, assuming something. ¹²			
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
chên (חֵן) [pronounced khayn]	<i>grace, favor, blessing</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2580 BDB #336
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿêynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced gay-nah-YIM]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

This phrase is literally *in your eyes*, but it can be translated *in your opinion, in your estimation, to your way of thinking, as you see [it]*. The dual and plural forms of this word appear to be identical.

Translation: ...if indeed I have found grace in Your eyes,...

You will note the particle of entreaty can be used with the hypothetical particle to mean *if now, if indeed*. This is the second time that we have found this word for *grace* in the Old Testament (the first was in reference to Noah

¹² H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 523.

in Genesis 6:8). Abraham appears to be speaking to One Person here, as he uses the 2nd person masculine singular suffix twice (here and in v. 3c).

Genesis 18:3c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'al (אֵל) [pronounced a]	<i>no, not; nothing; none; neither, nor; do not, let not [with a verb];; let there not be [with an understood verb];</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39
<p>'al can mean ❶ <i>nothing</i>; ❷ it can act as the adverb of negative, much like μή; ❸ it can take on the idea of <i>may [do not do so]</i>; ❹ it is used simply as a negative, but, like the Greek μή, it is put only in what are called subjective propositions, and thus is only found with the imperfect tense (the other negative in the Hebrew is not so confined); ❺ 'al is used most often as a conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, wishing that anything <i>not</i> be done. It can be used in an imprecation. ❻ It can be used interrogatively, meaning <i>whether</i> when a negative reply is expected; <i>have [you] not</i>.</p>			
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
'âbar (עָבַר) [pronounced gaw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over [beyond], to cross, to cross over; to go away, to depart; to violate [a law]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'al (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
<p>Together, they mean <i>from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from</i>. Some translators rendered this away from.</p>			
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced GE ^B -ved]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

Translation: ...please do not pass away from Your servant.

Abraham has run up to them and caught them and he asks only One Person, "Please do not pass away from Your servant." The verb Abraham uses is in the 2nd person masculine singular, rather than a plural.

Genesis 18:3 ...and said, "My Lords, if indeed I have found grace in Your eyes, please do not pass away from Your servant. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:3 ...and said, "My Lords, if I have indeed found grace in Your sight, then please do not pass away from Your servant. (Kukis paraphrase)

Let be taken please a little of waters and you [all] wash your feet and you [all] rest underneath the tree.

Genesis
18:4

Please let a little water be brought [to you] and then you [all] will wash your feet and rest underneath the tree.

Please allow me to bring a little water to you so that you can wash your feet and then rest underneath the tree.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos
Latin Vulgate
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

...until I have set forth provisions under the tree.

But I will fetch a little water, and wash ye your feet, and rest ye under the tree.

Let be taken please a little of waters and you [all] wash your feet and you [all] rest underneath the tree.

Peshitta (Syriac)
Septuagint (Greek)

Let me bring a little water and wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree.

Let water now be brought, and let them wash your feet, and refresh yourselves under the tree.

Significant differences:

At this point, the targum essentially preserves 3 words: *set forth*, *under* and *tree*. The English translation from the Latin and Syriac have the 1st person singular associated with the first verb (which is found in many English translations). The imperatives to *wash* and *rest* seem to be more imperatives of request rather than demand; and that comes across in the ancient translations.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible

Let a little water be brought so you may wash your feet and refresh yourselves under the tree.

Contemporary English V.

I'll have some water brought, so you can wash your feet, then you can rest under the tree.

Easy English
Easy-to-Read Version
Good News Bible (TEV)

Let us bring a little water so that you can wash your feet. Then rest under the tree.

I will bring some water to wash your feet. You can rest under the trees.

Let me bring some water for you to wash your feet; you can rest here beneath this tree.

The Message

I'll get some water so you can wash your feet. Rest under this tree.

New Berkeley Version

I beg of you, let us have a little water brought, to wash your feet. Recline under the tree...

New Century Version	I will bring some water so all of you can wash your feet. You may rest under the tree,...
New Living Translation	Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'[I will have] water brought and [my servants] will wash your feet; so rest here under the tree.
Ancient Roots Translinear	Please take a little water and wash your feet, and lean under the tree.
Beck's American Translation <i>God's Word™</i>	Somebody will get a little water; then wash your feet, and rest under the tree. Why don't we let someone bring a little water? After you wash your feet, you can stretch out and rest under the tree.
Revised English Bible	Let me send for some water so that you may bathe your feet; and rest under this tree.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Let me get water for washing your feet, and take your rest under the tree:...
NET Bible®	Let a little water be brought so that [The imperative after the jussive indicates purpose here.] you may all [he word "all" has been supplied in the translation because the Hebrew verb translated "wash" and the pronominal suffix on the word "feet" are plural, referring to all three of the visitors.] wash your feet and rest under the tree.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	Let a little water, pray, be taken, and they will wash your feet. And lean back under the tree.
Context Group Version	...let now a little water be fetched, and wash your { pl } feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.
exeGesés companion Bible	...take a little water, I beseech you, and bathe your feet and lean under the tree:...
Fred Miller's Revised KJV	I beseech you, let a little water be fetched and wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree.
Heritage Bible	I beg you, let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree;...
LTHB	Please allow a little water to be taken and You wash Your feet, and rest under the tree.
NASB	Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest [Lit support] yourselves under the tree;...
Syndein	"Let a little water, please/I exhort you, be fetched, and wash your feet {this was the invitation to enter one's home - 'wash your feet first'}, and rest yourselves under the tree {out of the hot sun}."
World English Bible	Now let a little water be fetched, wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.
Young's Updated LT	Let, I pray you, a little water be accepted, and wash your feet, and recline under the tree.

The gist of this verse: Abraham asks for them to rest under the tree while water was brought to wash their feet.

Genesis 18:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law- KAHKH]	<i>to be taken unto; to be brought to; to be take out of; to be taken away</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2 nd person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Genesis 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Genesis 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Genesis 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word <i>let</i> .			
m ^o câṭ (מֵאֶט) [pronounced m ^o -GAHT]	<i>a little, fewness, few</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4592 BDB #589
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced mah-YIHM]	<i>water (s)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4325 BDB #565

Translation: Please let a little water be brought [to you]...

Abraham has been a stranger in a strange land and has traveled the length and breadth of the land of Canaan as God had told him to do. He recognized the importance of hospitality and kindness. *To be brought* is the Hophal, which is the passive causative stem; the water is being brought (passive) and Abraham will not bring it out himself but have his wife or servants bring it out. He will personally bring out some food to them (*bring back*—literally, *fetch*—is in the Qal imperfect. The Qal is the simple verb form and the imperfect tense means that this will be a process. The word *servant* is the proper contrast to the word *lord*.

In the Hebrew, this is a little odd, because the verb is in the masculine singular, but *water* is a plural noun (however it is affixed to a masculine singular construct). Perhaps this would be reasonably translated **Please let one bring a little water [to you]**.

Interestingly enough, the verb is in the imperfect tense here, rather than the imperative, with the particle of entreaty affixed to it. If you read through the Hebrew exegesis, this particle can be used to express a wish or a desire, as well as used to urge someone to do something.

Abraham has already asked that these men not pass on or pass by. So, momentarily, they are just standing there, and he then asks if he can bring them some water. Abraham is expecting an answer here; although he is insisting here that they stay with him a bit. Once he completes his request, they will give him an answer.

Now, it does not appear that Abraham knows who this is—that he is speaking to the very God Who has made these many promises to him over these years.

Genesis 18:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râchats (רָחַץ) [pronounced <i>raw-BAHTS</i>]	<i>to wash, to bathe (oneself), to wash off (away); possibly to declare oneself innocent</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #7364 BDB #934
regel (רֶגֶל) [pronounced <i>REH-gel</i>]	<i>foot, feet</i>	feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #7272 BDB #919

Translation: ...and then you [all] will wash your feet...

The water is not for their parched mouths, but for the dry and dirty feet. These men had apparently been walking through the land. So, we might picture Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form, when with angels, flying overhead; but they are all walking, all in a human form.

In the dusty ancient world, men apparently walked everywhere in sandals—Reebok and Saucony having not yet having established outlets in Canaan—and their feet became dry and dirty. It became a common custom in the ancient world for a person returning home or being taken in temporarily as a guest, to wash his feet (or to have his feet washed) and, on some occasions, for oil to be applied to moisten the feet.



Abraham lavant les pieds aux anges 1854 Felix Henri Giacomotti (graphic); from [Pickleloaf](#); accessed January 1, 2014.

McGee comments: *In that day they did not take off their hat, but they did take off their shoes. Today we have reversed it. When you come to visit somebody, you leaves your shoes on and take off your hat. I'm not sure which is right. I like the idea, myself, of taking off my shoes. I like to go barefooted in the summertime. I wish it were possible more often. When I am out in the Hawaiian Islands, I put my shoes away and wear thongs or go barefooted as much as possible. I don't put my shoes back on the whole time I am there. I love to go barefooted. I think this was a great custom. It sure would make you feel at home to take off your shoes, wash your feet, and rest yourself under the shade of a tree. Abraham is really entertaining these men royally.*¹³

¹³ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed January 2, 2014.

Genesis 18:4c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâ'an (שׂאן) [pronounced <i>shaw-GAHN</i>]	<i>to lean [rest] upon [against], to support oneself against; it can be used figuratively for faith or confidence in someone</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Niphal imperative	Strong's #8172 BDB #1043
This verb is generally found with a preposition of some sort.			
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced <i>TAH-khahth</i>]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
'êts (עץ) [pronounced <i>gayts</i>]	<i>tree, wood; wooden post, [wooden] stake, gallows; [collectively for] a forest of trees</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6086 BDB #781

Translation: ...and rest underneath the tree.

Abraham makes a request, using the imperative mood, that they all take a rest under the tree. This further suggests one prominent shade tree in this area or that Abraham is indicating a particular tree near his tent.

Abraham makes a request, using the imperative mood, that they all take a rest under the tree. This further suggests one prominent shade tree in this area or that Abraham is indicating a particular tree near his tent.

The first words which Abraham spoke appear to be directed toward Jehovah Elohim, and they are in the singular. This second set of phrases that Abraham spoke is to all three, as all of the words and suffixes are in the plural in v. 4 (and the same will be true of v. 5).

Genesis 18:4 Please let a little water be brought [to you] and then you [all] will wash your feet and rest underneath the tree. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:4 Please allow me to bring a little water to you so that you can wash your feet and then rest underneath the tree. (Kukis paraphrase)

And I should fetch a morsel of bread and you [all] refresh your heart. Afterwards, you will pass on for upon thus you have passed upon your servant.” And they say, “Thus you will do as which you have spoken.”

Genesis 18:5

And I will fetch a bit of bread while you [all] refresh your hearts. Afterwards, you will pass on, since you have passed by your servant.” And they said, “So you will do just as you have proposed.”

Let me fetch a little bread while you all refresh your hearts. Then, afterwards, you may pass on, it is for this rest and a meal that you have come across your servant.” And they replied, “Okay, then, we accept your offer.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And I will bring food of bread, that you may strengthen your hearts, <u>and give thanks in the Name of the Word of the Lord</u> , and afterwards pass on. For therefore at the time of repast are you come, and have turned aside to your servant to take food. And they said, You have spoken well; do according to your word.
Latin Vulgate	And I will <u>set</u> a morsel of bread, and strengthen you your heart, afterwards you will pass on: for therefore are you come aside to your servant. And they said: Do as you have spoken.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And I should fetch a morsel of bread and you [all] refresh your heart. Afterwards, you will pass on for upon thus you have passed upon your servant.” And they say, “Thus you will do as which you have spoken.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	And <u>take</u> a morsel of bread and sustain your hearts; after that you shall go on your way, since you have come to your servant. And they said, So do as you have said.
Septuagint (Greek)	And I will bring bread, and <u>you shall eat</u> , and after this you shall depart <u>on your journey</u> , on account of which refreshment you have turned aside to your servant. And he said, So do, as you have said.
NETS (Greek)	And I shall take bread and <u>you will eat</u> , and after that, you will pass by <u>on your way</u> —inasmuch as you have turned aside to your servant.” And they said, “So do, as you have said.”

Significant differences: The English translation from the Latin has *set* instead of *fetch*, *bring*. The Syriac appears to treat this as a 2nd person rather than as a 1st person. The Hebrew says they will refresh themselves; the Greek says they will eat. I don’t know if this is an interpretation by the Greek or what.

The Greek also adds that they will then pass by *on the road (way)*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Let me offer you a little bread so you will feel stronger, and after that you may leave your servant and go on your way—since you have visited your servant." They responded, "Fine. Do just as you have said."
Contemporary English V.	Let me get you some food to give you strength before you leave. I would be honored to serve you." "Thank you very much," they answered. "We accept your offer."
Easy English	I will fetch a little food to give you energy. After that, you will be able to continue your journey. We are happy to have you with us.' The men said, 'That is good. Do as you have said.'
Easy-to-Read Version	I will get some food for you, and you can eat as much as you want. Then you can continue your journey."

Good News Bible (TEV)	I will also bring a bit of food; it will give you strength to continue your journey. You have honored me by coming to my home, so let me serve you." They replied, "Thank you; we accept."
<i>The Message</i>	I'll get some food to refresh you on your way, since your travels have brought you across my path." They said, "Certainly. Go ahead."
New Berkeley Version	...while I get a bite of bread so you may refresh yourselves; then you may go on; for this you surely came by your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."
New Century Version	...and I will get some bread for you so you can regain your strength. Then you may continue your journey." The three men said, "That is fine. Do as you said."
New Life Bible	And I will get a piece of bread so you may eat and get strength. After that you may go on your way, since you have come to your servant." The men said, "Do as you have said."
New Living Translation	And since you've honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey." "All right," they said. "Do as you have said."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	I will bring some bread for you to eat, and then you can continue your journey. But, [please stop] so your servant can refresh you.' And the Lord replied, 'Do just as you have said.' The AEB has this line as beginning v. 6, which is a far more logical approach.
Beck's American Translation	Let me get a bit of food for you to refresh yourselves; then go on. It was for this you were passing by your servant." "Do as you say," they answered.
<i>God's Word™</i>	Let me bring some bread so that you can regain your strength. After that you can leave, since this is why you stopped by to visit me." They answered, "That's fine. Do as you say."
New American Bible	Now that you have come to your servant, let me bring you a little food, that you may refresh yourselves; and afterward you may go on your way." "Very well," they replied, "do as you have said."
NIRV	"Let me get you something to eat to give you strength. Then you can go on your way. I want to do this for you now that you have come to me." "All right," they answered. "Go ahead and do it."
New Simplified Bible	»I will bring a bite to eat to refresh you. Stay a while before you continue your journey.« They responded: »Very well, do as you have said.«
Revised English Bible	...while I fetch a little food so that you may refresh yourselves. Afterwards you may continue the journey which has brought you my way.' They said, 'Very well, do as you say.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And let me get a bit of bread to keep up your strength, and after that you may go on your way: for this is why you have come to your servant. And they said, Let it be so.
Complete Jewish Bible	...and I will bring a piece of bread. Now that you have come to your servant, refresh yourselves before going on." "Very well," they replied, "do what you have said."

Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and take a bit of bread, and refresh your heart, and afterwards proceed; perhaps for this you passed near your servant?" And they replied, "Do as you have said."
HCSB	I will bring a bit of bread so that you may strengthen yourselves. This is why you have passed your servant's way. Later, you can continue on." "Yes," they replied, "do as you have said."
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves; then go on—seeing that you have come your servant's way." They replied, "Do as you have said."
New Advent Bible	And I will set a morsel of bread, and you strengthen your heart, afterwards you shall pass on: for therefore are you come aside to your servant. And they said: Do as you have spoken.
NET Bible®	And let me get [The Qal cohortative here probably has the nuance of polite request] a bit of food [tn Heb "a piece of bread." The Hebrew word ????? (lekhem) can refer either to bread specifically or to food in general. Based on Abraham's directions to Sarah in v. 6, bread was certainly involved, but v. 7 indicates that Abraham had a more elaborate meal in mind.] so that you may refresh yourselves [Heb "strengthen your heart." The imperative after the cohortative indicates purpose here.] since you have passed by your servant's home. After that you may be on your way [Heb "so that you may refresh yourselves, after [which] you may be on your way - for therefore you passed by near your servant."]. "All right," they replied, "you may do as you say."
NIV, ©2011	Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant." "Very well," they answered, "do as you say."
NIV – UK	Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant. Very well, they answered, do as you say.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And let me bring a piece of bread and refresh your hearts, and then go on, for this is why you have come to your servant." And they said, "Do as you have said."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And I will bring a morsel (mouthful) of bread to refresh and sustain your hearts before you go on further--for that is why you have come to your servant. And they replied, Do as you have said.
Concordant Literal Version	And I will take a morsel of bread and you shall eat and brace your hearts. And afterward shall you pass on your way, for therefore you pass by your servant. And saying are they, "So be doing as you speak."
Context Group Version	...and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and strengthen your { pl } heart; after that you { pl } shall pass on: since you { pl } have come to your { pl } slave. And they said, Do so, as you have said.
English Standard Version	...while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said."
exeGesés companion Bible	...and I take a morsel of bread, to support your hearts; and after that, you pass on: this is why you pass to your servant. And they say, Work thus, as you word.

Fred Miller's Revised KJV	And I will fetch a morsel of bread and comfort your hearts; after that you shall pass on: for therefore you are come to your servant. And they said, So do as you have said.
Heritage Bible	And I will bring a morsel of food, and refresh your hearts; after that, you shall cross on, because this is why you have crossed over to your servant. And they said, So, do what you have spoken..
LTHB	And I will bring a bite of bread and will sustain Your heart. Then You may pass on, for this is why You have passed over to Your servant. And they said, Do so, as you have said.
Modern KJV	And I will bring a bite of bread, and will comfort your hearts. After that You shall pass on. For this is why You have come to Your servant. And they said, Do so, as you have said.
New King James Version	And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."
Syndein	"And I will fetch a bit of food, and comfort you your 'inner being' {leb} {picture of rest, relax, eat and refresh yourself inside and out}. After that you shall pass on. For therefore are you come to your servant {meaning 'you have come to a gracious host who welcomes you'}. And they communicated categorically {dabar}, "So do/manufacture {'asah - out of your good mental attitude}, as you have said {'amar}."
Young's Updated LT	And I bring a piece of bread, and support you your heart; afterwards pass on, for therefore have you passed over unto your servant;" and they say, "So may you do as you has spoken.

The gist of this verse: Abraham asks the 3 men to wait while he fetches some food for them as well.

Genesis 18:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take from, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize, to take possession of; to send after, to fetch, to bring; to receive</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the voluntative hê	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
The hê at the end is called a voluntative hê and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i> .			
path (פַּת) [pronounced <i>pahth</i>]	<i>a fragment, a morsel, a piece [of bread]</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #6595 BDB #837
lechem (לֶחֶם) [pronounced <i>LEH-khem</i>]	literally means <i>bread</i> ; used more generally for <i>food</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3899 BDB #536

Translation: *And I will fetch a bit of bread...*

Although Abraham says that he will get them a morsel of bread, he is about to prepare them a tremendous meal for the ancient world. This is a way that he speaks modestly of what he is proposing. Probably, the idea is to appear as if this is not very much trouble.

Times have changed considerably. Abraham cannot very well send out for pizza, pop some leftovers into a microwave, take them to the nearest restaurant, etc. This hospitality thing takes a great deal of time. The water has not been mentioned; likely, at the very beginning, Abraham's servants automatically saw to their guests or Abraham directed them to do so. Abraham is doing this all as quickly as possible (*hastened* is used three times in vv. 6 & 7 alone—one time, it is translated *quickly make ready*). We are seeing a process which must have taken 2–3 hours. This is quite a feast, unlike any that three travelers would have had over the past few months.

Preparing a meal in the ancient world was quite time consuming. My guess is, a typical meal would take maybe 2 or 3 hours to prepare (unless the food was leftover or being eaten fresh); depending upon what was being made. Meat would have to be killed, bread would require somewhat of a process, and the oven would have to be heated. This was all quite time consuming, so that, even though a great deal of time was spent on acquiring the food, there was a lot of time spent on preparing the food as well.

There will be an interesting contrast between Abraham and Lot and how they provide for their company. Abraham prepares every brand new, from scratch, which is a serious meal. Lot will serve the two angels leftovers. Neither man knows that he is entertaining angels unawares (Hebrews 13:2).

What is being illustrated by this is, Abraham has more to offer God and the angels. Abraham and Lot both believe in the Revealed God. However, Abraham is a mature believer; he has grown in his human spirit; Lot has not; Lot has settled into a hotbed of immorality apparently because his wife likes the shoes and purses and fashion of the big city of Sodom.¹⁴ So Lot can offer them leftovers, but there is clearly no great fellowship which takes place. Furthermore, also take note that Jesus in His preincarnate form will fellowship with Abraham (this is known as a **Theophany**); He does not go to fellowship with Lot.

Genesis 18:5b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
çâ'ad (אָדָּ) [pronounced <i>saw-GAHD</i>]	<i>to support, to prop up, to refresh, to sustain, to stay, to assist; to comfort</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #5582 BDB #703
lêb (לֵב) [pronounced <i>lay^bv</i>]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524

Translation: *...while you [all] refresh your hearts.*

¹⁴ I saw this because she looked back when being rescued from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. She died as a result of looking back.

At this point, Abraham begins to address these men as 3, suggesting that they refresh themselves from their journey. *Your hearts* is actually *your [plural] heart*. Again, even if this is not the Trinity, the doctrine of the Trinity is embedded in these words—one in heart (essence) and 3 in person.

Genesis 18:5c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i>]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that</i>	preposition	Strong's #310 BDB #29
'ābar (אַבַּר) [pronounced <i>gaw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over [beyond], to cross, to cross over; to go away, to depart; to violate [a law]</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
kîy 'al kên (כִּי עַל כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kee ahl KANE</i>], which means, literally, <i>for therefore</i> . together they mean <i>inasmuch (as), forasmuch as, since, because</i> .			
'ābar (אַבַּר) [pronounced <i>gaw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over [beyond], to cross, to cross over; to go away, to depart; to violate [a law]</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
BDB gives a huge array of meanings: 1) <i>to pass over or by or through, alienate, bring, carry, do away, take, take away, transgress; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) to pass over, cross, cross over, pass over, march over, overflow, go over; 1a2) to pass beyond; 1a3) to pass through, traverse; 1a3a) passers-through (participle); 1a3b) to pass through (the parts of victim in covenant); 1a4) to pass along, pass by, overtake and pass, sweep by; 1a4a) passer-by (participle); 1a4b) to be past, be over; 1a5) to pass on, go on, pass on before, go in advance of, pass along, travel, advance; 1a6) to pass away; 1a6a) to emigrate, leave (one's territory); 1a6b) to vanish; 1a6c) to perish, cease to exist; 1a6d) to become invalid, become obsolete (of law, decree); 1a6e) to be alienated, pass into other hands.</i>			
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Genesis 18:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced GE ^B -ved]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 nd person masculine plural suffix; pausal form	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

Translation: Afterwards, you will pass on, since you have passed by your servant.”

Abraham repeats this verb, along with this long string of particles (however, these 3 particles are found together elsewhere). These words could belie Abraham's state of mind, determining what needed to be done in order to provide a meal for these men.

Again, Abraham does not appear to realize who these men are. However, because there were fewer people in that day, someone coming in to your periphery when you lived out in the sticks was a rarer occurrence. People who have traveled from a distance will often have news from other lands, which can be interesting. It is like speaking to a live newspaper of lands from beyond.

Meeting with travelers meant that Abraham would find out the news and the goings-on from wherever these men came—they are sort of a walking newspaper, if you will. Being an older man, Abraham had become much more interested in the news. I have noticed, as I get older, I find the news programs to be much more interesting than the entertainment programs, and therefore, I tend to watch a lot of news (particularly in comparison to what I did when young). So, do not discount the idea that Abraham looks at this having there right before him three potential FoxNews reporters with news of the world.

As an aside, even though we know who these men are, it is not clear that Abraham knows who they are. It is not clear that Abraham has even an inkling of who they are. The principle here is **Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for in doing so, some have entertained angels without realizing it** (Hebrews 13:2).

The phrase *refresh yourselves* is actually *refresh [plural] your [plural] heart [singular]*. Again, even if this is not the Trinity, the doctrine of the Trinity is embedded in these words—one in heart (essence) and 3 in person.

Genesis 18:5d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced kane]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485

Genesis 18:5d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
‘âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
’âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka’âsher (כְּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>kah-uh-SHER</i>] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner, in a manner as</i> . Back in 1Samuel 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i> .			
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180

Translation: And they said, “So you will do just as you have proposed.”

Now we have them speaking as a plurality rather than one speaking. They agree to what Abraham has proposed.

The third portion of this verse reads: *Afterwards, you will pass on, since you have passed by your servant.* This portion of v. 5 may seem to be a bit wordy and confusing, and we wonder exactly what Abraham is saying. I think that the New Berkeley Version (The Modern Language Bible) captures what is occurring here: *...for this you surely came by your servant.* An American Translation by William F. Beck has the same sense: *It was for this you were passing by your servant.* In other words, Abraham is saying, “It is for this reason—that you refresh yourselves and have a bite to eat—that you passed by this way.” You may find this a bit of a stretch, but Abraham strings together 3 particles, which is quite rare: *kîy ‘al kên* (כִּי לְעַל כֵּן) [pronounced *kee ahl KANE*], which mean, when taken together, *inasmuch (as), forasmuch as, since, because*.

Abraham does not appear to know that this is the LORD and two angels. He is being extremely gracious to these strangers, inferring that, “This is why God brought you along this way, so that you can stop off here, rest yourselves, wash your feet, and have a meal with me.” He does not realize that they have come his way for two purposes; one to speak of life and the other to speak of death.

Genesis 18:5 And I will fetch a bit of bread while you [all] refresh your hearts. Afterwards, you will pass on, since you have passed by your servant.” And they said, “So you will do just as you have proposed.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:5 Let me fetch a little bread while you all refresh your hearts. Then, afterwards, you may pass on, it is for this rest and a meal that you have come across your servant.” And they replied, “Okay, then, we accept your offer.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Now, let's look at all of these verses together; when Abraham's guest is spoken of or to in the **singular**, it will be **bolded**; and underlined when in the plural: **Gen 18:1–5** Then **Y^ehowah appears** unto him by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day. Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up [lit., *and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks*] and, behold, [there are] three men standing beyond [over?] him. So he looks and then he runs to meet them from the opening of the tent. Then he bowed down toward the earth, and said, "My Lords, if indeed I have found grace in **Your** eyes, please do not **pass** away from **Your** servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." Again, *Lords* is plural, but is used when addressing one person as well. So, there is nothing amiss with the way the Abraham is speaking to these three, but it is still an odd jumbling together of singulars and plurals which cannot really be appreciated in the English, as our 2nd person singular pronoun is identical to our 3rd person singular pronoun.

And so hastens Abraham the tent-ward unto Sarah and so he says, "Hasten [quickly prepare] three of seahs of flour—fine flour; knead and prepare bread-cakes."

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Abraham then hurried to the tent to Sarah and he said, "Quickly prepare 3 seahs of fine flour; [then] knead [it] and prepare bread-cakes."

Abraham then hurried to the tent, to Sarah, and he said to her, "Quickly prepare 3 seahs of the finest flour; and then knead it and prepare bread-cakes."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said <u>to her</u> , Hasten three measures of flour-meal, mix and make cakes.
Latin Vulgate	Abraham made haste into the tent to Sara, and said <u>to her</u> : Make haste, <u>temper</u> together three measures of flour, and make cakes <u>upon the hearth</u> .
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so hastens Abraham the tent-ward unto Sarah and so he says, "Hasten [quickly prepare] three of seahs of flour—fine flour; knead and prepare bread-cakes."
Peshitta (Syriac)	So Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make cakes <u>on a griddle</u> .
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham hastened to the tent to Sarah, and said <u>to her</u> , Quickly, knead three measures of fine flour, and make cakes.

Significant differences: There is no *to her* in the Hebrew; but it is found in the targum, Latin and Greek. I am not sure what the word *temper* means in the English translation from the Latin, but there are 2 verbs here. I assume it means something like *knead*. The Latin and targum do not appear to indicate that the flour is of a special quality.

Although the English translation from the Latin and Syriac have these cakes being prepared *on the griddle* or *upon the hearth*; these words are not found in the Hebrew. E-sword gives a Hebrew equivalent for these words in their KJV+ version, but the reference is back to the word *to make, to do, to prepare*, which is already accounted for.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	So Abraham hurried to Sarah at his tent and said, "Hurry! Knead three seahs [One seah is seven and a half quarts.] of the finest flour and make some baked goods!"
Contemporary English V.	Abraham quickly went to his tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry! Get a large sack of flour and make some bread."
Easy English	Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. And he said, 'Go quickly and get three measures of the best flour. That is, flour that people have made from wheat. Mix it with water and make loaves.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham hurried to the tent. Abraham said to Sarah, "Quickly, prepare enough wheat for three loaves of bread."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, "Quick, take a sack of your best flour, and bake some bread."
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. He said, "Hurry. Get three cups of our best flour; knead it and make bread."
New Century Version	Abraham hurried to the tent where Sarah was and said to her, "Hurry, prepare twenty quarts of fine flour, and make it into loaves of bread."
New Life Bible	So Abraham ran into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Hurry and get three pails of fine flour, mix it well, and make bread."
New Living Translation	So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry! Get three large measures [Hebrew 3 seahs, about 15 quarts or 14 liters] of your best flour, knead it into dough, and bake some bread."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So, AbraHam ran back to SarAh (who was in the tent) and said to her, 'Hurry. knead three scoops of fine flour and make [some bread].'
Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham hastened to the tent to Sarah and said, "Hasten with three seahs of flour meal. Knead it and make flatbread."
New American Bible	Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick, three measures* of bran flour! Knead it and make bread."
NIRV	So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick!" he said. "Get about half a bushel of fine flour. Mix it and bake some bread."
Today's NIV	So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs [That is, probably about 36 pounds or about 16 kilograms] of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Then Abraham went quickly into the tent, and said to Sarah, Get three measures of meal straight away and make cakes.
New Advent Bible	Abraham made haste into the tent to Sara, and said to her: Make haste, temper together three measures of flour, and make cakes upon the heart.
NET Bible®	So Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, "Quick! Take [The word "take" is supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons. In the Hebrew text the sentence lacks a verb other than the imperative "hurry." The elliptical structure of the language reflects Abraham's haste to get things ready quickly] three measures [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] **of fine flour, knead it, and make bread** [The bread was the simple, round bread made by bedouins that is normally prepared quickly for visitors]."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And hastening is Abraham toward the tent to Sarah. And saying is he to her, "Hasten! Three seahs of meal flour knead, and make ember cakes.
English Standard Version	And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes."
exeGesés companion Bible	And Abraham hastens into the tent to Sarah and says, Hasten three seahs of fine flour, knead and work ashcakes.
Heritage Bible	And Abraham flowed like liquid into the tent to Sarah, and said, Cause to flow three measures of ground flour, knead it, and make cakes.
LTHB	And Abraham ran into the tent to Sarah and said, Hurry, <i>prepare</i> three measures of fine meal, knead it and make cakes.
Webster's Bible Translation	And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead [it], and make cakes upon the hearth.
World English Bible	Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quickly make ready three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes."
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham hastens towards the tent, unto Sarah, and says, "Have three measures of flour-meal, knead, and make cakes."

The gist of this verse: Abraham quickly goes to Sarah's tent and asks her to make some fresh bread.

Genesis 18:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mâhar (מָהַר) [pronounced <i>maw-HAHR</i>]	<i>to hasten, to hurry, to make haste; its transitive use is to prepare quickly, to bring quickly, to do quickly</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #4116 BDB #554
ʿAbʿrâhâm (אֲבִרְהָא) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
ʾohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced <i>OH-heh</i>]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article with the directional hê	Strong's #168 BDB #13

Genesis 18:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979

Translation: Abraham then hurried to the tent to Sarah...

We know that both Abraham and Sarah are older people (99 and 89 at this time); and we also know that they have a number of slaves. However, Abraham does not go to his chefs (assuming that they have them), but he goes directly to Sarah.

This is quite interesting, and it gives us an idea that, despite his age, Abraham is still quite youthful. When was the last time you heard the remark, "And the 99 year old guy hurried off to..."? You have never heard that said before. But Abraham was vigorous and healthy. He had hungry guests and he was going to hustle.

This, and chapters which will come later, tell us that God has greatly blessed Abraham with good health.

Genesis 18:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâhar (מָהַר) [pronounced maw-HAHR]	<i>to hasten, to hurry, to make haste; its transitive use is to prepare quickly, to bring quickly, to do quickly</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #4116 BDB #554
shâlôsh (שָׁלוֹשׁ) [pronounced shaw-LOHSH]	<i>a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome</i>	numeral; masculine singular construct	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025

Genesis 18:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
סֵֹאֶה (סֹאֶה) [pronounced seh-AW]	<i>a measure of flour, grain; a particular measure of corn (1/3 ephah?); transliterated seah, s^oah</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #5429 BDB #684
kemach (קֶמַח) [pronounced KEH-mahkh]	<i>flour, meal</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7058 BDB #887
סֹֹלֶת (סֹֹלֶת) [pronounced SOH-lehth]	<i>flour or fine flour</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5560 BDB #701

Translation: ...and he said, “Quickly prepare 3 seahs of fine flour;...

Now, my assumption here is, Abraham explains what is needed for this meal to Sarah. It is likely that she will not prepare it herself but instruct her servants to do so. However, that thinking is conjecture on my part.

In the reading which I have done, 3 seahs is a lot of flour—20 quarts, according to one source, and 36 lbs. according to another. Your average loaf of bread is a pound or a pound and a half. This suggests that a great deal of bread is being made here. However, bear in mind that Abraham has a very large compound of perhaps 300–600 people (recall that he went to war with 318 men¹⁵). Therefore, this large meal would have been served to the rest of the camp. However, all of the interaction is going to be between Abraham and these 3 men. So, it is not clear whether the rest of Abraham’s camp joins them or not at this particular time.

Sarah is in the tent, and Abraham runs in, and tells her what needs to be prepared for their guests. We do not really know how large a seah is; and there are some fairly large estimates (15 quarts, according to the NLT; 36 lbs, according to Today’s NIV; 20 quarts, according to the NET Bible). If this is strictly being made for these 3 men or for these 3 men and Sarah, then these estimates seem rather large to me. Having made bread before, 1–2 cups of flour is usually needed for a loaf of bread. So, if we are strictly look at a meal for 3–5 people, I would guess that we are dealing with perhaps 4 or 5 cups at the most. If Sarah is making enough to have leftover bread, then perhaps 10 cups of flour.

The reason that this is presented as a large amount is in order to keep this in line with 1Samuel 25:18 and 1Kings 18:32, where a seah seems to be a much larger amount. This gives us several options: (1) Abraham is telling Sarah to make an awful lot of bread, most of which would be eaten later (to be eaten by their employees and slaves). (2) A seah is not a particular measure that does not vary, but its size depends upon the thing being measured. So a seah of flour might be used for one loaf of bread; a seah of seed might be used to seed a quarter acre of ground (or, whatever). (3) Or this word was carried over, throughout the years, but it came to denote a different amount in different centuries. Any one of these explanations would allow for these passages to be reconciled.

¹⁵ This would have included some allies who did not live in his camp.

Genesis 18:6c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lûwsh (לוּשׁ) [pronounced loosh]	<i>to knead [dough]</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #3888 BDB #534
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘âsâh (אָסָה) [pronounced ‘gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
‘ûggâh (אֻגָּה) [pronounced ‘goog-GAW]	<i>a disc or cake of bread</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #5692 BDB #728

Translation:...[then] knead [it] and prepare bread-cakes.”

As already discussed, this would have been a *lot* of bread. Although Abraham gives these orders to Sarah, again, it is possible that she will then instruct her personal staff to take care of this. Whether or not she prepares this herself or not is unknown; but the text appears to indicate that.

Genesis 18:6 Abraham then hurried to the tent to Sarah and he said, “Quickly prepare 3 seahs of fine flour; [then] knead [it] and prepare bread-cakes.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:6 Abraham then hurried to the tent, to Sarah, and he said to her, “Quickly prepare 3 seahs of the finest flour; and then knead it and prepare bread-cakes.” (Kukis paraphrase)

And unto the herd has run Abraham, and so he takes a son of herd, tender and good, and so he gives [it] unto the young man and so he hastens to prepare him.

Genesis 18:7

Then Abraham ran to the herd and he took a calf, tender and healthy [lit., *good*], and gave [it] to the young servant boy, and he quickly prepared it.

Then Abraham ran to the herd and selected a tender and healthy calf and then gave it to his young servant boy, who quickly prepared it.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

And unto the flock ran Abraham, and took a calf, tender and fat, and gave to a young man, and hastened to make prepared meats;...

Latin Vulgate

And he himself ran to the herd, and took from there a calf, very tender and very good, and gave it to a young man, who made haste and boiled it.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And unto the herd has run Abraham, and so he takes a son of herd, tender and good, and so he gives [it] unto the young man and so he hastens to prepare him.

Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf fat and good, and gave it to a <u>servant</u> , and he hastened to prepare it.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham ran to the herd, and took a young calf, tender and good, and gave it to his <u>servant</u> , and he hastened to prepare it.

Significant differences: The Latin appears to insert *from there* into this verse, along with a couple extra adverbs. Although both the Syriac and Greek appear to have *servant*, this is a reasonable translation for this particular noun, which means *young man*.

The targum appears to add in a couple of words at the end. The Latin appears to have *boiled* rather than *prepared*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham ran to the cattle, took a healthy young calf, and gave it to a young servant, who prepared it quickly.
Contemporary English V.	After saying this, he rushed off to his herd of cattle and picked out one of the best calves, which his servant quickly prepared.
Easy English	Meanwhile, Abraham dashed out to the *cattle. He chose a fine young bull (male cow) and he gave it to a servant. The servant hurried to get it ready.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Abraham ran to his cattle. Abraham took his best young calf. Abraham gave the calf to the servant. Abraham told the servant to hurry, kill the calf, and prepare it for food.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then he ran to the herd and picked out a calf that was tender and fat, and gave it to a servant, who hurried to get it ready.
<i>The Message</i>	Then Abraham ran to the cattle pen and picked out a nice plump calf and gave it to the servant who lost no time getting it ready.
New Berkeley Version	Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a calf tender and good and gave it to the servant who dressed it in short order.
New Century Version	Then Abraham ran to his herd and took one of his best calves. He gave it to a servant, who hurried to kill it and to prepare it for food.
New Life Bible	Then Abraham ran to the cattle and took out a young and good calf. He gave it to the servant to make it ready in a hurry.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham ran to the oxen, and took a tender and good son of an ox, and gave it to a lad to hasten and make it.
<i>God's Word</i> ™	Then Abraham ran to the herd and took one of his best calves. He gave it to his servant, who prepared it quickly.
New Simplified Bible	Then Abraham ran to the herd. He selected a fat calf and told a servant to butcher it and prepare it.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And running to the herd, he took a young ox, soft and fat, and gave it to the servant and he quickly made it ready;...
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Ferar-Fenton Bible	Abraham also ran to the fold, and took a fine, fat calf and gave it to a youth, who at once dressed it.
NET Bible®	Then Abraham ran to the herd and chose a fine, tender calf, and gave it to a servant [Heb "the young man."], who quickly prepared it [The construction uses the Piel preterite, "he hurried," followed by the infinitive construct; the two probably form a verbal hendiadys: "he quickly prepared."].
New Heart English Bible	Abraham ran to the herd, and fetched a tender and good calf, and gave it to the servant. He hurried to dress it.
NIV – UK	Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And Abraham ran to the herd and brought a calf tender and good and gave it to the young man [to butcher]; then he [Abraham] hastened to prepare it.
English Revised Version	And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly.
exeGesés companion Bible	And Abraham runs to the oxen and takes a tender and good son of the oxen and gives it to a lad; and he hastens to work it: .
Heritage Bible	And Abraham ran to the herd, and brought a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, and he flowed to make it..
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And Abraham ran to the herd, and fetched a tender and good calf, and gave it to the attendant; and he hurried to dress it.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	And Abraham ran out to the herd and brought a calf, tender and good. And he gave it to a young man. And he hurried to dress it.

The gist of this verse: Abraham selects a young calf to be slaughtered for this feast, giving it to one of his servants to prepare it.

Genesis 18:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'el (לָא) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced <i>baw-KAWR</i>]	<i>bull, cow, ox, collectively: herd, cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #1241 BDB #133
rûts (רוּץ) [pronounced <i>roots</i>]	<i>to run, to hasten to; to move quickly [and with purpose]; to rush upon [in a hostile manner]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7323 BDB #930

Genesis 18:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw- HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: So Abraham ran to the herd...

What I am a little confused about is, why don't we begin this verse with a wâw consecutive, as there are wâw consecutive throughout and imperfect tenses of verbs, describing successive actions.

It could be the emphasis, which here is on *the herd* to which Abraham runs. Or this may not have been Abraham's next action. He may have gone to the herd first.

It is unclear at this point as to whether we are to read any symbolism into this phrase, as Jesus Christ is representative of the calf who died that we might live.

Genesis 18:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law- KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take from, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize, to take possession of; to send after, to fetch, to bring; to receive</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced baw-KAWR]	<i>bull, cow, ox, collectively: herd, cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular collective noun	Strong's #1241 BDB #133
rak ^e (רַךְ) [pronounced rahkh]	<i>tender, delicate, soft; infirm; weak, weak of heart, timid</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #7390 BDB #940
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾôwb (אוֹבֵט) [pronounced toh ^{bv}]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine feminine singular adjective which can act like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373

Translation: ...and he took a calf, tender and healthy [lit., good],...

We have *son of the herd* here, which suggests that we are dealing with a young calf rather than with a fully-grown bull. For those of us who have tasted veal (there seems to be less of it available today), we know that this is a wonderful tasting meat.

Abraham selects a calf which is tender and good, which suggests that this calf is very handsome and healthy.

Genesis 18:7c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to, against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
na'ar (נער) [pronounced NAH-gahr]	<i>boy, youth, young man; personal attendant; slave-boy</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654

Translation: ...and gave [it] to the young servant boy,...

One reason why I have suggested that Sarah actually oversaw the bread making is here, where Abraham appears to hand off the calf to one of his young servants.

In any case, the tradition of men handling the barbequing outside seems to go back 4000 years ago. Abraham oversees the outside bbq and Sarah deals with the beans and cornbread which she prepares inside.¹⁶

It is interesting that much of this mundane stuff is found here. We do not know whether Abraham did this before with our Lord. However, what this clearly refers to is fellowship, and God will give Abraham a great deal of latitude when it comes to speaking to Him.

Genesis 18:7d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

¹⁶ I don't know if she really prepares this inside her tent; but I would assume she had a cooking tent for the time that it rained.

Genesis 18:7d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
mâhar (מָהַר) [pronounced <i>maw-HAHR</i>]	<i>to hasten, to hurry, to make haste; its transitive use is to prepare quickly, to bring quickly, to do quickly</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #4116 BDB #554
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	affixed to a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Translation: ...and he quickly prepared it.

We have 3 hungry men—again, we do not know whether Abraham knows that one of them is Jehovah Elohim—and Abraham has ordered for this meal to be put together as quickly as possible.

My guess is, a large meal like this, which is being assembled in 3 different places, takes probably 2–3 hours in order to prepare. If the oven has to have coals added to it, perhaps a bit longer.

In a tradition which has seemed to come down to us, even to today, 4 millennia later, the barbeque is done by the man and the wife is preparing the inside food. Abraham chooses the calf which will be eaten, but has another young man prepare it. This is veal, not beef, that Abraham is serving. Abraham needs to return to speak to his guests.

Genesis 18:7 Then Abraham ran to the herd and he took a calif, tender and healthy [lit., *good*], and gave [it] to the young servant boy, and he quickly prepared it. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:7 Then Abraham ran to the herd and selected a tender and healthy calf and then gave it to his young servant boy, who quickly prepared it. (Kukis paraphrase)

And so he takes yogurt and milk and the son of the herd which he prepared and so he sets [them] to their faces and he is standing by them under the tree. And so they eat.

Genesis
18:8

Then he took yogurt, milk and the veal [lit., *calf*] which he had prepared and placed [these things] before them. Then he stands by them under the tree while they eat.

Then Abraham took yogurt, milk and the veal which had been prepared and placed these things before them. Then he stood under the tree nearby while they ate.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	...and he took rich cream and milk and the calf which <u>the young man</u> had made into prepared meats, and set them before them, <u>according to the way and conduct (hilkath) of the creatures of the world; and he served before them, and they sat under the tree; and he quieted himself (to see) whether they would eat.</u>
Latin Vulgate	He took also butter and milk, and the calf which he had <u>boiled</u> , and set before them: but he stood by them under the tree.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he takes yogurt and milk and the son of the herd which he prepared and so he sets [them] to their faces and he is standing by them under the tree. And so they eat.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set them before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they ate.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had prepared; and he set them before them, and they did eat, and he stood by them under the tree.
Significant differences:	The Hebrew does not indicate that the veal was broiled. The Latin leaves off the final phrase that they eat.

As usual, there is a lot of additional text in the targum.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Then Abraham took butter, milk, and the calf that had been prepared, put the food in front of them, and stood under the tree near them as they ate.
Contemporary English V.	He then served his guests some yogurt and milk together with the meat. While they were eating, he stood near them under the trees,...
Easy English	Then Abraham took butter and milk. And he took the meat that the servant had cooked. He served them to his guests. Abraham stood under the tree. And he served them as they ate.
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham brought the meat and some milk and cheese and set them down in front of the three men. Then Abraham stood near the men {ready to serve them} while they sat under the tree and ate.
Good News Bible (TEV)	He took some cream, some milk, and the meat, and set the food before the men. There under the tree he served them himself, and they ate.
<i>The Message</i>	Then he got curds and milk, brought them with the calf that had been roasted, set the meal before the men, and stood there under the tree while they ate.
New Century Version	Abraham gave the three men the calf that had been cooked and milk curds and milk. While they ate, he stood under the tree near them.
New Life Bible	He took milk and cheese and the meat which he had made ready, and set it in front of them. He stood by them under the tree while they ate.
New Living Translation	When the food was ready, Abraham took some yogurt and milk and the roasted meat, and he served it to the men. As they ate, Abraham waited on them in the shade of the trees.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Next, he got some butter, some milk, and the calf that he had prepared, and set it all out before them. And they ate as he stood near them under the tree.
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Ancient Roots Translinear	He took butter and milk, and the son of the ox which he made, and gave it in front of them. He stood by them under the tree, and they ate.
Beck's American Translation	Then he took cheese and milk and the veal he had prepared and set these before them. Then he waited on them under the tree as they ate.
Christian Community Bible	He took butter and milk and together with the calf he had prepared laid it all before them. And while he remained standing, they ate..
God's Word™	Abraham took cheese and milk, as well as the meat, and set these in front of them. Then he stood by them under the tree as they ate.
New American Bible	Then he got some curds [a type of soft cheese or yogurt.] and milk, as well as the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them, waiting on them under the tree while they ate.
NIRV	Then he brought some butter and milk and the calf that had been prepared. He served them to the three men. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.
New Jerusalem Bible	Then taking curds, milk and the calf which had been prepared, he laid all before them, and they ate while he remained standing near them under the tree.
Revised English Bible	He took curds and milk and the calf which was now ready, set it all before them, and there under the tree waited on them himself while they ate.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And he took butter and milk and the young ox which he had made ready and put it before them, waiting by them under the tree while they took food.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then he took the cheese and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and placed before them, and he stood opposite them under the trees while they were eating.
HCSB	Then Abraham took curds and milk, and the calf that he had prepared, and set them before the men. He served them as they ate under the tree.
NET Bible®	Abraham [Heb "he"; the referent (Abraham) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] then took some curds and milk, along with the calf that had been prepared, and placed the food [The words "the food" are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons. In the Hebrew text the verb has no stated object.] before them. They ate while [The disjunctive clause is a temporal circumstantial clause subordinate to the main verb.] he was standing near them under a tree.
NIV – UK	He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had made ready, and set it before [the men]; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.
Concordant Literal Version	And taking is he clotted cream and milk, and the young one of the herd which he had made ready, and he is putting it before them. And he is standing by them under the tree, and eating are they.
Darby Translation	And he took thick and sweet milk, and the calf that he had dressed, and set [it] before them; and he stood before them under the tree, and they ate.
English Standard Version	Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and he takes butter and milk and the son of the oxen he worked

	and gives it at their face; and he stands by them under the tree and they eat.
Heritage Bible	And he took curdled milk [curdled milk, chemah. Gesenius says, In no place in the Old Covenant does it appear that butter should be understood, which, by the ancients, and even now [circa 1815] by the Orientals was only accustomed to be used medically. This is whole milk, soured and clabbered.], and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before their face; and he stood by them under the tree, and they ate.
Syndein	And he took butter, and milk, and the 'meat of the calf' which he {the young man} had dressed/'manufactured {'asah - out of the calf}, and set it before them. And he {Abraham} stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. {Note: Here Abraham is in fellowship and these three accept his hospitality. In a few verses, two of the three will go to Sodom and refuse hospitality. Very few Sodomites are believers and therefore cannot be 'believers in fellowship'.}
World English Bible	He took butter, milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. He stood by them under the tree, and they ate.
Young's Updated LT	And he takes butter and milk, and the son of the herd which he has prepared, and sets before them; and he is standing by them under the tree, and they do eat.

The gist of this verse: Abraham brings them the cheese, milk and veal and sets this all before them under the tree, and then he waited on them while they ate.

Genesis 18:8a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced waw]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	to take, to take from, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize, to take possession of; to send after, to fetch, to bring; to receive	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
chem ^ê âh (חֶמֶת) [pronounced kheh ^e -MAW]	butter, curds; yogurt; cottage cheese	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2529 BDB #326
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châlâb (חֶלֶב) [pronounced khaw-LAW ^ê V]	milk; cheese	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2461 BDB #316

Translation: Then he took yogurt, milk...

My assumption here is, this is a great feast with items like yogurt or cheese and milk to round out the sumptuous menu.

Abraham tends to this food, as it is associated with his herd that are outside.

Genesis 18:8b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
bâqâr (בקר) [pronounced <i>baw-KAWR</i>]	<i>bull, cow, ox, collectively: herd, cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular collective noun	Strong's #1241 BDB #133
'ăsher (אשר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'âsâh (עשה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation: ...and the veal [lit., *calf*] which he had prepared...

The calf had been killed, dressed and cooked over a period of at least 2 hours—possibly more like 3 or 4.

While he is seeing to all of this, his guests are probably sitting under the shade of a tree (if it is a warm day).

As is often the case, the text gives Abraham credit for preparing the veal, although he simply oversaw the process and his servant boy did the actual preparation.

Genesis 18:8c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 18:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
pānîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	face, faces countenance; presence	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they mean *before them, before their faces, in their presence, in their sight, in front of them.*

Translation: ...and placed [these things] before them.

Everyone is outside. Although we know how Jesus and the disciples dined, it is less clear how people dined in Abraham's day. Is there a table? Is there a blanket of some sort on the ground?

Genesis 18:8d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hûw' (הוּ) [pronounced hoo]	he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
ʿamad (עָמַד) [pronounced gaw-MAHD]	to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand	Qal active participle	Strong's #5975 BDB #763
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced gahʌ]	upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to	preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH- khahth]	underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
ʿêts (עֵץ) [pronounced gayts]	tree, wood; wooden post, [wooden] stake, gallows; [collectively for] a forest of trees	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6086 BDB #781

Translation: Then he stands by them under the tree...

Interestingly enough, what is possible a cultural norm is, Abraham does not join in the feast with them, but he stands nearby while they eat.

Genesis 18:8e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat; to devour, to consume, to destroy</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #398 BDB #37

Translation: ...while they eat.

Abraham's visitors eat while Abraham is standing nearby under the tree.

The meal certainly represents fellowship, but Abraham, standing afar off, indicates that he, like all other people in time, have not had their sins truly forgiven because Christ had not yet died for their sins.

Abraham and the Three Angels by Giovanni Andrea de Ferrari (graphic); from [About Bible Videos](#); accessed January 1, 2014.

Gen 18:8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

Genesis 18:8 Then he took yogurt, milk and the veal [lit., calf] which he had prepared and placed [these things] before them. Then he stands by them under the tree while they eat. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:8 Then Abraham took yogurt, milk and the veal which had been prepared and placed these things before them. Then he stood under the tree nearby while they ate. (Kukis paraphrase)



What seems to be the meal is something akin to cottage cheese, warm goat's milk and veal. Whether the bread was eaten first as an appetizer, or with the meal, we do not know. My guess is, start to finish, such a meal would take 2–3 hours to prepare. So, while Abraham is supervising the preparation, these men are resting under the tree, drinking water, and washing their feet.

What seems to be true in Scripture is, the Preincarnate Christ and angels are all capable of eating, although this appears to be for enjoyment and fellowship as opposed to sustenance.

Interestingly enough, it appears to be the tradition for guests to eat first, as Abraham is simply standing by the tree while they eat.

Although this all happened, exactly as spoken of; there is some symbolism here. Abraham does not enjoy complete the fellowship with the Lord because Jesus had not yet died for our sins. So having fellowship with our Lord through the Holy Spirit was not available to believers during the time of Abraham.

So far, Jesus, in His Preincarnate Form, and two angels, walked by Abraham's compound, and Abraham called them over to rest and to be fed.

This is what we have studied so far.

Gen 18:1–8 (MKJV) And Jehovah appeared to him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed toward the ground. And he said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, do not pass away, I pray, from Your servant. Let a little water, I pray, be brought, and wash Your feet, and rest under the tree. And I will bring a bite of bread, and will comfort your hearts. After that You shall pass on. For this is why You have come to Your servant. And they said, Do so, as you have said. And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal; knead it, and make cakes. And Abraham ran out to the herd and brought a calf, tender and good. And he gave it to a young man. And he hurried to dress it. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they ate.

And so they say unto him, “Where [is] Sarah your woman?” And so he says, “Behold, in the tent.”

Genesis
18:9

Then they asked him, “Where [is] Sarah your wife?” And he answered, “Observe, [she is] in the tent.”

When they asked him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” he answered, “There, in the tent.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And they said to him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, <u>she is</u> in the tent.
Latin Vulgate	And when they had eaten, they said to him: Where is Sara thy wife? He answered: Lo <u>she is</u> in the tent.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so they say unto him, “Where [is] Sarah your woman?” And so he says, “Behold, in the tent.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, Behold, <u>she is</u> in the ten.
Septuagint (Greek)	And He said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he answered and said, Behold, in the tent.
Significant differences:	There is no <i>she is</i> in the Hebrew, as we find in the English translations of the targum, the Latin and the Syriac.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	...and they asked, "Where is your wife Sarah?" "She is right there in the tent," Abraham answered.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then the men said to Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?"
New Berkeley Version	They asked him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" He said, "There in the tent."
New Living Translation	"Where is Sarah, your wife?" the visitors asked. "She's inside the tent," Abraham replied.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then the Lord asked, 'Where is your woman, SarAh?' And [AbraHam] answered, 'Look, she's there in the tent!'
God's Word™	They asked him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" He answered, "Over there, in the tent."
NIRV	"Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "Over there, in the tent," he said
New Jerusalem Bible	'Where is your wife Sarah?' they asked him. 'She is in the tent,' he replied.
New Simplified Bible	Then they said to him: »Where is Sarah your wife«? He responded: »Here, in the tent.«

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ferar-Fenton Bible	They afterwards asked him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" and he replied, "She is in the tent." .
HCSB	"Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There, in the tent," he answered.
New Advent Bible	And when they had eaten, they said to him: Where is Sara your wife? He answered: Lo she is in the tent.
NET Bible®	Then they asked him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" He replied, "There [The particle hinnēh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>] often accompanies a gesture of pointing or a focused gaze.], in the tent."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, [She is here] in the tent.
Concordant Literal Version	And saying are they to him, "Where is Sarah, your wife?And answering, he is saying, "Behold! In the tent."
Context Group Version	And they said to him, Where is Sarah your woman { or wife }? And he said, Look, in the tent.
English Standard Version	They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent."
exeGesés companion Bible	And they say to him, Where is Sarah your woman? And he says, Behold, in the tent.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, Look, in the tent.
Webster's Bible Translation	And they said to him, Where [is] Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.
World English Bible	They said to him, "Where is Sarah, your wife? He said, "See, in the tent."
Young's Updated LT	And they say unto him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" and he says, "Lo—in the tent;"

The gist of this verse: When asked where his wife is, Abraham replies that she is in the tent.

Genesis 18:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'ayyêh (אֵי) [pronounced <i>ahy-YAY</i>]	<i>where</i>	interrogative adverb	Strong's #346 BDB #32
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: Then they asked him, “Where [is] Sarah your wife?”

We do not know whether or not Abraham has mentioned Sarah, but it is likely that the men may have seen her moving about preparing their meal; or they may have heard Abraham speaking to her. In any case, God knows who Sarah is. We already know how protective Abraham is of his wife (and, particularly of his own life when it might be threatened due to the attractiveness of his wife) so it is more likely that Abraham kept her out of sight. Therefore, when he spoke of *fetching* the bread in the Qal rather than in a causative stem, it is because he personally brought the bread out to them. Sarah prepared it, but remained in the tent, out of sight and likely Abraham was never even heard speaking to her. *They said* is in the Qal imperfect, meaning that each of the three men asked Abraham where his wife was until he finally answered.

My guess is, Sarah's name is mentioned, because God wants to catch her ear. He knows that she is not too far away, and nothing catches our ear more than hearing our own name spoken (unless it is the call of other mother, using our first, middle and last names—that is something we try not to hear). So Sarah will hear her name and then begin to pay attention to what is being said.

At this point, we still do not know if Abraham knows that this is God—there is nothing in this chapter which clearly indicates when Abraham realized this. It is even possible that he knew from the very beginning.

We do not have the entire conversation recorded. It does seem reasonable that Abraham has mentioned Sarah by name, because he had instructed her to bake some bread. Since they are asking, this does not mean that they have not yet seen Sarah; this could simply mean that they are asking her whereabouts at this time.

This is interesting. We have a plural verb of *to say* here. These three men may represent the Trinity (again, this is Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form along with two angels). Perhaps they speak in unison, or perhaps God asks Abraham this, and the other angels chime in.

There is an unseen conflict which we have studied in the past called the **Angelic Conflict** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). The angels would know all about Sarah and all about God's promises to Abraham. However, these things come to pass in real time for angels, who appear to be confined to time, just as we are. Angels who are allowed to walk upon this earth as men seem to generally have the similar limitations as do men.

Y^ehowah Elohim, being omniscient, certainly knows where Sarah is. However, these angels, knowing that Sarah is a key to the future of human history, do not share this same omniscience. However, they are no doubt keenly observant with possibly greater sensory perception than we enjoy.

This verse does not mean that these men had not seen Sarah yet. Likely, in the preparation of these meal, she came in and out of the tent several times. Abraham may or may not have introduced her to them, depending upon the customs of that day. In any case, at this point in time, Y^ehowah God will speak about Sarah specifically. What is occurring is, she is near the tent door listening to what is being said. Or, more likely, she hears her name, so she moves closer to the conversation to listen.

Genesis 18:9b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'ohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced <i>OH-heh</i>]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #168 BDB #13

Translation: And he answered, “Observe, [she is] in the tent.”

The NET Bible points out something which makes a great deal of sense: The particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*], which means *behold, listen, attention; often accompanies a gesture of pointing or a focused gaze*.¹⁷ So Abraham answers by pointing or shifting his eyes in the direction of the tent and says, “In the tent.”

¹⁷ From <http://bible.org/netbible/index.htm> accessed January 22, 2012.

Unlike some cultures, the woman is quite prominent in the line of Christ. Not only do we know the entire line of our Lord, but, in many cases, we know a great deal about some of the wives along the way. This is a key theological point and seems to go against ancient traditions of family lines.

Genesis 18:9 Then they asked him, “Where [is] Sarah your wife?” And he answered, “Observe, [she is] in the tent.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:9 When they asked him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” he answered, “There, in the tent.” (Kukis paraphrase)

The entire verse reads: Then they asked him, “Where [is] Sarah your wife?” And he answered, “Observe, [she is] in the tent.” God the Holy Spirit will spend 7 verses on Sarah and this child she will bear. God is emphasizing the importance of the woman. Quite obviously, women are quite handy when it comes to having a baby; but this emphasis is upon the virgin Mary who will be the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ. From the very beginning, back to Genesis 3:15, our Lord is called the *Seed of the Woman*. So, from time to time—particularly at great transitional moments such as this—the woman will be emphasized.

Gen 18:9 They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "Behold, she is in the tent."

The reason that God says this is, He wants Sarah’s attention for what He is about to promise. What better way to get Sarah’s attention than to ask, “Where is your wife, Sarah?” Whatever she was doing at that moment, her ears perked up at hearing her name, and she began to listen in from the tent door flap.

For whatever reason, the culture of that day or personal shyness, Sarah was not out with Abraham and the three. However, Sarah is suddenly the focus of the conversation.

And so He says, “Returning, I will return unto you as the time a life, and, behold, a son to Sarah your woman.” And Sarah was listening a door of the tent and he behind Him.

Genesis
18:10

Then He said, “I will certainly return to you as the time [of] life, and, observe, Sarah, your wife, [will have] a son [lit., a son to Sarah, your woman].” And Sarah was listening [at] the door of the tent (and it was behind Him).

Then He said, “I will definitely return to you in the spring, and, take note, Sarah, your wife, will have a son at that time.” And Sarah was listening from the door of the tent which was behind Him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

And ONE of them said, Returning I will return to you in the coming year; and you will be revived, and, behold, Sarah your wife will have a son. And Sarah was hearkening at the door of the tent, and Ishmael stood behind her, and marked what the Angel said. [JERUSALEM. And He said, Returning I will return to you at that time, to revive you, and, behold, Sarah your wife will have a male child. And Sarah was hearkening at the door of the tent, and Ishmael stood behind her.]

Latin Vulgate	And he said <u>to him</u> : I will return and <u>come to thee at this time, life accompanying</u> , and Sara, thy wife, <u>shall have</u> a son. Which when Sara heard, <u>she laughed</u> behind the door of the tent.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he says, "Returning, I will return unto you as the time a life, and, behold, a son to Sarah your woman." And Sarah was listening a door of the tent and he behind Him.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD said, I will certainly return to you <u>at this time next year</u> , and I, Sarah your wife <u>shall be with</u> child, and shall have a son. And Sarah heard <u>it</u> in the tent door which was behind he.
Septuagint (Greek)	And He said, I will return <u>and come to you according to this period seasonably</u> , and Sarah your wife <u>shall have</u> a son; and Sarah heard at the door of the tent, <u>being</u> behind him.

Significant differences: As usual, there is a lot in the targum that is not found in the Hebrew. The English translation from the Latin adds *to him* to the first phrase.

In the Hebrew, the repetition of a verb generally refers to something which is certain; the Latin and Greek, apparently, just threw in a different additional verb instead. *As the time of life* is difficult to interpret, so, above, you see how it was translated into the English, eventually, having gone through another language first. However, just saying this is a year in the future is incorrect.

When it comes to Sarah *having a son*, there is not verb. It is common in the Hebrew for this to be simply expressed as *to Sarah*. The English translations from the Latin, Syriac and Greek all have the verb *to have*.

The targum, inexplicably, throws Ishmael into the mix, in the very end. In the final phrase, the Latin adds that *she laughed* (which is found later in this chapter). The Hebrew says the tent door is behind him, but without using a verb. The Greek throws in a verb.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Then one of the men said, "I will definitely return to you about this time next year. Then your wife Sarah will have a son!" Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.
Contemporary English V.	One of the guests was the LORD, and he said, "I'll come back about this time next year, and when I do, Sarah will already have a son." Sarah was behind Abraham, listening at the entrance to the tent.
Easy English	The *Lord said, 'I shall certainly come back to you next year. Sarah your wife will have a son.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Now Sarah was listening at the door of the tent. The door was behind the speake. Then the Lord said, "I will come again in the spring. At that time, your wife Sarah will have a son."
Good News Bible (TEV)	One of them said, "Nine months from now I will come back, and your wife Sarah will have a son." Sarah was behind him, at the door of the tent, listening.
<i>The Message</i>	One of them said, "I'm coming back about this time next year. When I arrive, your wife Sarah will have a son." Sarah was listening at the tent opening, just behind the man.

New Berkeley Version	Then He said [again, this is the Lord Himself, ultimately to come as the Messiah], Without fail I shall come back to you at the reviving season and, see, Sarah, your wife will have a son. Now Sarah was listening in at the tent door behind Him.
New Living Translation	Then one of them said, "I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!" Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So the Lord said, 'I will return this way and come to see you during this season [next year], and your woman SarAh will have a son.' Well, SarAh overheard this as she stood behind him at the entrance of the tent.
Ancient Roots Translinear	He said, "I <i>will</i> return a period of life to you to behold a son for Sarah your woman!" Sarah had heard him in the tent opening afterwards.
Beck's American Translation	"I will certainly come back to you," He said, "at about the time it takes to have a child, and then your wife Sarah will have a son." Sarah was listening at the tend door behind him.
Christian Community Bible	And the visitor said, "At this same time next year I will return and Sarah by then will have a son." Now Sarah was behind him, listen ing at the entrance to the tent..
God's Word™	The LORD said, "I promise I'll come back to you next year at this time, and your wife Sarah will have a son." Sarah happened to be listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind him.
New American Bible	One of them* said, "I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son." Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, just behind him. Gn 17:19; 21:1; 2 Kgs 4:16; Rom 9:9.
New Simplified Bible	He said: »Next year I will give you and Sarah a son.« (Sarah was listening in the tent door behind him.).

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And he said, I will certainly come back to you in the spring, and Sarah your wife will have a son. And his words came to the ears of Sarah who was at the back of the tent-door.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	They then said, "I will restore you, as at the period of youth, and there shall come a son from Sarah your wife," and Sarah heard it at the door of the tent, where she was behind.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Then one said, "I will return to you next year [Genesis 17:21 2Kings 4:16–17], and your wife Sarah shall have a son!" Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind him.
New Advent Bible	And he said to him: I will return and come to you at this time, life accompanying, and Sara, your wife, shall have a son. Which when Sara heard, she laughed behind the door of the tent.
NET Bible®	One of them [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.] **said, "I will surely return [The Hebrew construction is emphatic, using the infinitive absolute with the imperfect tense. I will surely return. If Abraham had not yet figured out who this was, this interchange would have made it clear. Otherwise, how would a return visit from this man mean Sarah would have a son?] to you when the season comes round again [Heb "as/when the time lives" or "revives," possibly referring to the springtime], and your wife Sarah will have a son [Heb "and there will be (???????, hinneh) a son for Sarah."!]" (Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, not far behind him [This is the first of two disjunctive parenthetical clauses preparing the reader for Sarah's response (see v. 12)].**

New Heart English Bible

Then he said, "I will certainly return to you when the season comes round. Behold, Sarah your wife will have a son." Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him.

The Scriptures 1998

And He said, "I shall certainly return to you according to the time of life, and see, Sarah your wife is to have a son!" And Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

[The Lord] [One of the three guests was the Lord, and since God the Father was never seen in bodily form (John 1:18), only the "Angel of the covenant," Christ Himself, can be meant here; see especially Gen. 18:22 and also the footnote on Gen. 16:7.] **said, I will surely return to you when the season comes round, and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son. And Sarah was listening and heard it at the tent door which was behind Him.**

Concordant Literal Version

And saying is He, "Return, yea, return will I to you according to this season of life, and, behold! A son has Sarah, your wife. And Sarah is hearing at the opening of the tent, for she was behind him.

Context Group Version

And he said, I will certainly return to you when the season comes around; and, see, Sarah your woman { or wife } shall have a son. And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him.

Darby Translation

And he said, I will certainly return to thee at [this] time of the year, and behold, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the tent-door, which was behind him.

exeGesés companion Bible

And he says, In returning,
I return to you according to the time of life
and behold, to Sarah your woman - a son.
- and Sarah hears it in the tent opening behind him.

Green's Literal Translation

And He said, Returning I will return to you at the time of life; and, Behold! A son shall be to your wife Sarah. And Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, and it was behind Him.

Heritage Bible

And he said, Turning back, I will turn back to you according to the time of life, and lo, to Sarah, your wife, shall be a son. And Sarah heard it attentively in the tent door, and she was behind him..

LTHB	And He said, Returning I will return to you at the time of life; and, Behold! A son shall be to your wife Sarah. And Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, and it was behind Him.
NASB	He said, "I will surely return to you at this time next year [Lit when the time revives]; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.
New King James Version	And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)
New RSV	Then one said, 'I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.' And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him.
Syndein	And he {the stranger} said {'amar}, "I will certainly return unto you according to the norm or standard of human cycle {`eth chay - idiom: literally 'cycle of life' - meaning sexual relations, man and wife here, and then 9 months later}. And, lo, Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him {picture of her "listening at the keyhole"}.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And he said, I will certainly return to you when the season comes around; and, see, Sarah your wife will have a son. And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him.
World English Bible	He said, "I will certainly return to you when the season comes round. Behold, Sarah your wife will have a son." Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him.
Young's Updated LT	And he says, "returning I return unto you, about the time of life, and lo, to Sarah your wife a son." And Sarah is hearkening at the opening of the tent, which is behind him. For whatever, reason, <i>Young's Literal Translation</i> is out-of-synch with the other translations. At this point, the final sentence is actually v. 11.

The gist of this verse: God promises Abraham that He would return in the spring and that Sarah would have a son at this time. Sarah is listening to this through the opening in the tent.

Genesis 18:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
shûwb (שב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #7725 BDB #996

Genesis 18:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
<p>The infinitive absolute has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add <i>ing</i> to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form.¹⁸</p> <p>A Qal infinitive absolute is a verb which can act like noun, a verb or an adverb. Generally it takes the place of a noun and serves to intensify meanings. When used as a complement of affirmation, it may be rendered <i>surely, indeed, definitely</i>; and when it is a complement of improbability and condition, we render it <i>at all, freely, indeed</i>. The Qal infinitive absolute can also serve as an adverbial complement; or, as a verb, it can replace finite verbs, imperatives, participles, and the infinitive constructs.¹⁹</p>			
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: Then He said, "I will certainly return to you..."

The Hebrew doubles up the verb, which indicates great emphasis. We would use the words *certainly, definitely* to translate the extra verb.

You will notice that, after using plural suffixes and plural verbs, suddenly, we are back to one person, Whom most people recognize as being *the Lord*.

Note the parallel here; Y^ehowah would return, at the proper time, to fulfill His promises to Abraham. This has a very near fulfillment, which is about 9 months in the future, and two far fulfillments, when Jesus comes in the 1st advent and then in the 2nd. At the proper time, He will return to Abraham and to Abraham's people.

Many Bibles have *the Lord said*; but there is no word for *Lord* in this verse. However, we know this is Jesus Christ, in His preincarnate form, speaking to Abraham, which will become clear in Genesis 18:13.

Again, we go from the plural to the singular; in v. 9, *they said*; and in v. 10, *He said*. Again, this is not the Trinity, but it is illustrative of the Trinity.

¹⁸ *Biblical Hebrew*; Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

¹⁹ Taken from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 2277.

That God would return to Abraham and Sarah is emphatic in this verse. Interestingly enough, God does not return to Abraham and Sarah, as He does here, in a physical manifestation; but the idea is, God will make certain that she gives birth to the child He has promised them. This will be something which God oversees from conception to birth. Genesis 21:1–2 read: *And Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said. And Jehovah did to Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.* There is no conversation and no particular action ascribed to God when Sarah gives birth to their son. Now, when their son is somewhere between 3–5 years old, God will speak to Abraham; but prior to that, there is no record of God coming in human form to Abraham at the birth of his son.

There is the option that, God did return to Abraham in physical form, but Abraham did not write about that; however, most of the history of Abraham centers around two things: his meetings with God and where he lives. Therefore, it would seem strange to leave this most important meeting out. After all, this kicks off many of the promises that God has been making to Abraham, which promises Abraham has believed, and which promises God will bring to pass.

Therefore, because of the significance of this birth, God will be there (but not in human form); God will breathe life into Isaac; and there will be a very large number of angels observing this birth and observing Isaac's life (compare Hebrews 12:1, where we are said to be *surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses*).

Genesis 18:10b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'êth (עֵת) [pronounced éyath]	<i>time, the right time, the proper time; opportunity</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6256 BDB #773
chayyâh (חַיָּה) [pronounced khay-YAWH]	<i>living thing, animal, life, organisms, life form; appetite, revival, renewal; community, family, assembled group, allied families, bands</i>	substantive; feminine noun	Strong's #2416 BDB #312

Translation: ...as the time [of] life,...

This phrase is rather difficult to interpret, as the second noun has so many meanings, but the idea is, there is a proper time when Jehovah will return, and this proper time is relating to *living, revival, renewal*. Therefore, most people understand this to mean that God would return to Abraham in the spring.

Now, notice what a change this is. For 13 years, Abraham does not see God; God does not come to him. However, God came to Abraham in the previous chapter; He comes back to Abraham in this chapter, a month or so later; and God promises to return at a specific time, which I don't believe He has promised before.

Genesis 18:10c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: ...and, observe, Sarah, your wife, [will have] a son [lit., a son to Sarah, your woman].”

What God says here is a play on the words which Abraham used; and this simply suggests that God is listening to Abraham and God hears Abraham. Abraham says, “**Behold**, she’s in the tent” and God says, “**Behold**, she will have a son.” I would not be shocked if Abraham’s gesture was copied. If Abraham motioned where she was with his eyes, then God very possibly did the exact same thing with His eyes.

Omniscience is implied in v. 9 where they ask about Sarah; and it is further implied here where, having not even seen Abraham's wife, God says that she will be with child in 9 months. Sarah was obviously not allowed to be out visiting with Abraham and the men and this is likely due to either the culture. However, since three strangers traveling through is an unusual occurrence and since their cable is probably on the fritz that night, Sarah is curious as to the topics of conversation. Particularly when she has heard her name used several times.

Genesis 18:10d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979

Genesis 18:10d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
shâma' (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	feminine singular, Qal active participle	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
pethach (פתח) [pronounced PEH-thakh]	<i>opening, doorway, entrance, gate [for a tent, house, or city]; metaphorically, gate [of hope, of the mouth]</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6607 BDB #835
'ohel (אהל) [pronounced OH-heh]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #168 BDB #13

Translation: And Sarah was listening [at] the door of the tent...

Sarah is not with the men hanging out. Although it is possible that she is shy; it is more likely a custom that she not join in at this meal.

While Jehovah is speaking, Sarah is inside of the tent, as Abraham said, but she is right at the tent door, listening to all that was said. God tells Abram, “Behold, Sarah, your wife, will have a son.” There is no question as to whom God is speaking about—it is not just going to be some woman named Sarah, but this will be Abraham’s wife, Sarah. There is now a specific time frame put on this birth, which had not been done before.

What God says here is a play on the words which Abraham used; and this simply suggests that God is listening to Abraham and God hears Abraham. Abraham says, “Behold, she’s in the tent” and God says, “Behold, she will have a son.” I would not be shocked if Abraham’s gesture was copied. If Abraham motioned where she was with his eyes, then God very possibly did the exact same thing with His eyes.

Genesis 18:10e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
'achar (אחר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that</i>	preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29

Translation:...(and it was behind Him).

Literally, this reads, *and he behind Him*. The 3rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun refers back to the *tent door*, as there is no neuter in the Hebrew, as there is in the English and Greek.

Genesis 18:10 Then He said, "I will certainly return to you as the time [of] life, and, observe, Sarah, your wife, [will have] a son [lit., *a son to Sarah, your woman*]." And Sarah was listening [at] the door of the tent (and it was behind Him). (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:10 Then He said, "I will definitely return to you in the spring, and, take note, Sarah, your wife, will have a son at that time." And Sarah was listening from the door of the tent which was behind Him. (Kukis paraphrase)

And Abraham and Sarah [were] old going in the days. Had ceased to be to Sarah a road like the women.

Genesis
18:11

Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old and advancing in years [lit., *the days*] [and] the mode of life as women [i.e., *fertility*] had ceased to be for Sarah.

Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advancing in years and the manner of women [i.e., *fertility*] had ceased in Sarah's life.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	But Abraham and Sarah were old, they had <u>mounted</u> (alu) in days, and with Sarah the way of women had ceased.
Latin Vulgate	Now <u>they were both</u> old, and <u>far</u> advanced in years, and it had ceased to be with Sara after the manner of women.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And Abraham and Sarah [were] old going in the days. Had ceased to be to Sarah a road like the women.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Now Abraham and Sarah were old and <u>well</u> advanced in years; and Sarah <u>was beyond the age of childbearing</u> .
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in days, and the custom of women ceased to be with Sarah.

Significant differences: The Latin appears to have *they were both* instead of *Abraham and Sarah*. The Latin and Syriac appear to add a qualifier to being advanced in years (*very*).

The English translation from the Syriac interprets the final sentence rather than translates it. The targum appears to leave out the verb *to be*; although I am dealing with the English translation of the targum.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible Contemporary English V.	Now Abraham and Sarah were both very old. Sarah was no longer menstruating. Abraham and Sarah were very old, and Sarah was well past the age for having children.
Easy English	Abraham and Sarah were old. They had lived for very many years. Sarah was not able to have children any longer.

Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham and Sarah were very old. Sarah was past the right age for women to have children.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham and Sarah were very old, and Sarah had stopped having her monthly periods.
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham and Sarah were old by this time, very old. Sarah was far past the age for having babies.
New Berkeley Version	...and since Abraham and Sarah were aged, well advanced in years, and the custom of women had ceased with Sarah,...
New Century Version	Abraham and Sarah were very old. Since Sarah was past the age when women normally have children,...
New Life Bible	Now Abraham and Sarah were old. They had lived many years. The way of women had stopped for Sarah.
New Living Translation	Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Of course, AbraHam and SarAh were old, and since SarAh was [well beyond the age of child bearing],... The AEB also mixes up this verse and the next verse somewhat.
Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham and Sarah came as elders in days. For Sarah, the path for women had ceased.
Beck's American Translation	Abraham and Sarah were old and getting along in years, and Sarah had had her change of life.
<i>God's Word</i> TM	Abraham and Sarah were old. Sarah was past the age of childbearing.
New American Bible	Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years, and Sarah had stopped having her menstrual periods. Gn 17:17; Rom 4:19; Heb 11:11-12.
NIRV	Abraham and Sarah were already very old. Sarah was too old to have a baby.
New Jerusalem Bible	Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well on in years, and Sarah had ceased to have her monthly periods.
Revised English Bible	Both Abraham and Sarah were very old, Sarah being well past the age of child-bearing.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Now Abraham and Sarah were very old, and Sarah was past the time for giving birth.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Now, Abraham and Sarah were old—advanced in years and feeble. It was not with Sarah as women are;...
HCSB	Abraham and Sarah were old and getting on in years. Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years; Sarah had stopped having the periods of women.
NET Bible®	Abraham and Sarah were old and advancing in years [Heb "days."]; Sarah had long since passed menopause [Heb "it had ceased to be for Sarah [after] a way like women."].).
NIV, ©2011	Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV	Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in years; it had ceased to be with Sarah as with [young] women. [She was past the age of childbearing].
Concordant Literal Version	Now Abraham and Sarah are old, coming into days. It had left off to come to Sarah, according to the path of women.
Heritage Bible	And Abraham and Sarah were old and advancing in days; it ceased to be with Sarah after the well trod way of women..
LTHB	And Abraham and Sarah <i>were</i> aged, going on in days. The custom as to women had ceased to be to Sarah.
Modern KJV	Now Abraham and Sarah were old, far gone in days, and it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.
New King James Version	Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing [Literally the manner of women had ceased to be with Sarah].
Syndein	Now Abraham and Sarah were old {zaqen}, having come {long} in age, and it ceased to be with Sarah 'the passing of life' {'orach - means after menopause} of women {ishshah}.
Webster's Bible Translation	Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old [and] far advanced in age; [and] it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.
World English Bible	Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age. It had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham and Sarah are aged, entering into days--the way of women had ceased to be to Sarah. This is actually v. 12 in <i>Young's Literal Translation</i> .

The gist of this verse: Both Abraham and Sarah were old at this time, and Sarah was beyond the age of childbearing.

Genesis 18:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְאָהָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
zâqên (זָקֵן) [pronounced <i>zaw-KANE</i>]	<i>old, elderly, aged</i>	masculine plural adjective	Strong's #2205 BDB #278

Genesis 18:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
bôw' (בּוֹ) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old and advancing in years [lit., *the days*]...

Abraham and Sarah were both growing old. Neither one of them had functioning equipment, you might say.

In case you wonder, at what point do people become old, the Bible answers that here: Abraham is 99 and Sarah is 90—both are past the age of having children, and the Bible calls them *old* at this point. In fact, this is the first time in the Bible that anyone is referred to as being old. And, even though, in your English Bible, you have read passages like, **And Noah was 600 years old**; this is the first time that this word actually occurs in the Hebrew. The word is zâqên (זָקֵן) [pronounced zaw-KANE], which means, *old, elderly, aged*. Strong's #2205 BDB #278. This word will occur several times in Genesis to designate becoming old and living a full life: Genesis 19:4 25:8 35:29 43:27 44:20. In the plural, this is rendered *elders*.

Genesis 18:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
châdal (חָדַל) [pronounced khaw-DAHL]	<i>to cease and desist, to leave off, to cease, to leave, to forsake</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2308 BDB #292
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
The verb <i>to be</i> in the construct often carries with it a temporal meaning, e.g., <i>when [he] was, while [he] was</i>			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979

Genesis 18:11b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ōrach (אֲרָח) [pronounced OH-rahkh]	<i>a [well-trodden] road; way, path; metonyms: traveler; traveling company, caravan; metaphorically: a course [way] of living [or action]; mode, manner, way; a path of life</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #734 BDB #73
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, just as; according to; about, approximately; combined with an infinitive, it can also take on the meaning as, often, when, as soon as</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
'īshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: ...[and] the mode of life as women [i.e., fertility] had ceased to be for Sarah.

What appears to be the meaning here is, Sarah is no longer fertile. However, bear in mind, after some 25+ years of marriage with Abraham, she never did conceive, insofar as we know. They had had no children together at any point in their marriage. What we have here is couched in euphemistic terms, reasonably translated above.

This is one of the reasons having more than one Bible is a good idea. A word-for-word translation of this verse makes little sense. You might be able to figure out what it is saying, but, in many cases, you might not. Therefore, having a backup Bible that translates what is being said here—that Sarah was past the age of conceiving children—is always a nice addition to your library.

The second half of this verse is fairly difficult to translate. Very literally, this reads: **Had ceased to be to Sarah a road like the women.** The word *road* is the subject of the verse, because it is a masculine singular noun and the verb requires a masculine singular noun. This gives us **A road like [or, as] the women had ceased to be to [or, for] Sarah.** The word *road* is 'ōrach (אֲרָח) [pronounced OH-rahkh], which means, *a [well-trodden] road; way, path; metonyms: traveler; traveling company, caravan;* and it is used metaphorically to mean: *a course [way] of living [or action]; mode, manner, way; a path of life.* Strong's #734 BDB #73. This gives us, **The path of life according to women had ceased to be for Sarah.** Based upon Sarah's age, this has been extrapolated to mean, that Sarah was in menopause, beyond the age of child bearing, and had ceased to menstruate. So, very literal translations, such as Webster's Bible Translation, read: **Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old [and] far advanced in age; [and] it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.** The World English Bible, the Modern KJV, the Literal Translation of the Holy Bible, Young's Literal Translation, the Concordant Literal Version and the Heritage Bible all have very similar and confusing translations. The New King James Version gives a less than literal translation, but footnotes the literal meaning: **Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing** [Literally the manner of women had ceased to be with Sarah]. Therefore, you may like a literal translation, if you are concerned with having an accurate translation; but it is always helpful to have access to a translation that is not quite so literal. If having two Bibles is difficult, then let me recommend either the **NET Bible®** for your computer (with footnotes to get the accurate translation) or the New King James Version if you

want a Bible you can carry around with you. Or, if you like having access to a number of translations, **e-sword** is the best computer program that I have found for this, and e-sword and dozens of translations are free.

In the previous chapter, Abraham was 99 years old and had just been circumcised. In Genesis 21, he will be 100 years old, and with a child. Therefore, this is just a couple months after the circumcision of all of the males in Abraham’s group. As was covered in an earlier lesson, circumcision represents the regeneration of Abram’s sexual organs, which represents spiritual regeneration (being born again). Abraham will heal from the circumcision, and he will have new life in his phallus. From him will be born the Jewish race. There will be new life in the human race; as the Jewish race begins with Abraham and will be perpetuated by a miraculous birth.

At hearing that they would have a child a year later, both Abraham and Sarah thought about it, and knew that they were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased with Sarah, which simply means, her periods and her ability to give birth were over a long time ago. At this point, humanly speaking, she was not going to bear a child—Sarah was quite certain of this.

This is a theme found several times in the Bible. A couple gets beyond a point in time where childbirth is possible, and then they have a child. What does this mean? Why did God do it this way? The birth of their son, Isaac, will look forward to the birth of Jesus Christ. His birth will also be improbable (actually, impossible). Both of these births will be miraculous.

Genesis 18:11 **Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old and advancing in years [lit., *the days*] [and] the mode of life as women [i.e., *fertility*] had ceased to be for Sarah.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:11 **Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advancing in years and the manner of women [i.e., *fertility*] had ceased in Sarah’s life.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Every recorded incident in the Bible is significant. When God is involved in something taking place, it becomes even more significant.

How Isaac’s Unusual Birth Foreshadowed Our Lord’s

The Birth of Isaac	The Birth of Jesus
This birth involved life coming from death. Abraham was sexually dead and his wife was unable to bear children; yet Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son, Isaac. Genesis 18:12	Jesus Christ was born spiritually alive although His mother had a sin nature. So, from death, came life. Mary was dead spiritually and yet she bore the Lord. Romans 5:12, 14, 17
This birth, coming from death, was based upon regeneration (circumcision). Genesis 17:10–17	The purpose of our Lord’s birth was so that He would die for our sins, and, because of that, we could be regenerated (born again) at salvation. Romans 5:10, 17 6:10 2Corinthians 4:12
The association of Jesus with death is emphasized because the baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes (long strips of cloth used to wrap dead bodies). Luke 2:7	

How Isaac's Unusual Birth Foreshadowed Our Lord's

The Birth of Isaac	The Birth of Jesus
The conception and birth are both miraculous. Abraham was sexually dead. Genesis 18:11–14 Romans 4:17–19	His birth was miraculous. Joseph, Jesus' legal father, was not a party to the conception of Jesus Christ. He was spiritually dead and would have passed along his sin nature to Jesus. Therefore, Joseph could not participate in the conception of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 7:14 Matthew 1:18–19 Luke 1:34, 37
The birth was unexpected. Even when told she would give birth to a son, Sarah laughed. Genesis 18:12	Being born to a virgin was unexpected. This caught Joseph off-guard and he was prepared to put Mary away privately Matthew 1:19
Isaac's birth was prophesied long before he was born, when Abram is 75 years old. Genesis 12:4, 7	Our Lord's birth was prophesied centuries earlier. Isaiah 7:14
His birth was foretold prior to conception. Genesis 12:7 13:16 15:4	Jesus' birth was foretold prior to conception. Luke 1:28–31
Abraham's progeny would be royalty. Genesis 17:6	Jesus Christ was royalty by blood and would be royalty in actuality. Luke 1:32–33
Through Isaac will come all of the Jews, who are the people of God. Genesis 17:7–9, 19 21:12 Romans 9:7 Heb 11:18	Through Jesus will be the salvation of the Jews, who are the people of God. Of course, through Him is the salvation of the gentiles as well. Romans 1:16
God asks, in v. 14, "Is there anything too difficult for the Lord?"	The birth of our Lord will set into motion that which will save us. God has found a way, despite the barrier between God and man, to save us, without violating or compromising His character. "Is there anything too difficult for the Lord?" When the angel spoke to Mary of her becoming pregnant apart from a man, the angel states: "For with God nothing shall be impossible." (Luke 1:37).
When it comes to the conception and birth of Isaac, God will be there, but He will be working behind the scenes. Genesis 18:10	God worked behind the scenes in the birth of Jesus, His Son. The Holy Spirit <i>overshadowed</i> Mary. Luke 1:35

You may recall the terms *type* and *antitype*. The birth of Isaac is the *type*; and the birth of Jesus is the *antitype*. The circumstances of Isaac's birth seem a little weird and unusual; however, when placed side-by-side its future counterpart, it all fits together.

Type and antitype is one of the great proofs of the Bible. Throughout the Old Testament, there are dozens of types, in all different forms and situations, all of which find their completion or their reflection in the antitype (which is Jesus Christ, or something related to Jesus Christ, e.g., His birth, His crucifixion, His Millennial reign). The way that the Old and New Testaments fit together is an amazing thing. The Old Testament was clearly in existence and established as authoritative before the birth of Jesus (we have manuscripts of most of the Old Testament which predates Jesus' birth by 100–300 years). So these dozens of types had all been committed both to "paper" and to memory as well for hundreds of years before our Lord arrived on the scene. In fact, the Old Testament was composed progressively, over a period of over 1000 years (I believe that the length of time of its composition was probably 4000–4500 years), with every section of this set of progressive writings to contain both types and prophecies of the Lord to come.

There are two short introductory articles to typology which seem fairly reasonable: from [Theopedia](#) and from [Eric Landstrom](#).

There is another fact about our Lord that is nearly completely ignored. His ministry was the most limited ministry in the history of religious figures. Jesus confined Himself to teaching for a very short period of time (3–4 years of a public ministry) over a very small portion of land (he taught only northern and southern Israel), speaking to a very limited audience and He wrote absolutely nothing down. The only other religious figures with this sort of a limited ministry are those you have never heard of, because no one thought to record anything that they did or said. We know about Mohammed, Confucius, and Buddha because their ministries took place over decades, they spoke and taught huge numbers of people in very large geographical areas. Yet, Jesus still fulfilled all that was written in the Old Testament.

Written testimony of our Lord would appear to be ripe for legend and mythology, except for the fact that, what was written about Him was written nearly immediately, principally by eyewitnesses, many copies of which we have which go back to within decades of them being written (this is unknown for ancient documents outside of the Bible). Usually legend and myths are composed hundreds of years later by those have no direct, 2nd hand or even 3rd hand information about the person they are mythologizing. But we have a plethora of documents, all written within decades of His crucifixion, copied and recopied and distributed throughout the Roman world, so that, if any of it were false, there would have been thousands of eyewitnesses who would have disputed the contents of these documents in writing.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

So far, this is what we have studied: [Gen 18:1–9](#) (MKJV mostly) And Jehovah appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, and he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day. Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed toward the ground. And he said, "My Lord [or, lords], if now I have found grace in Your sight, do not pass away, I pray, from Your servant. Let a little water, I pray, be brought, and wash Your feet, and rest under the tree. And I will bring a bite of bread, and will comfort your hearts. After that You shall pass on. For this is why You have come to Your servant [i.e., this is why you just happened to walk past my tent]." And they said, "Do so, as you have said." And Abraham quickly went into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal; knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran out to the herd and brought a calf, tender and good. And he gave it to a young man. And he hurried to dress it. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they ate. They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "Behold, she is in the tent."

So Abraham is enjoying fellowship with God and two angels, which is what sharing a meal represents. Then the topic turns to Sarah. God obviously knows where Sarah is. The angels with Him may not. God will involve Sarah

in a conversation, which God has not done before. However, first God needs her attention, and He gets it when **They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?"** Sarah can hear what is going on, and, obviously, when she hears her name spoken, she begins to pay close attention to what is being said. Nothing gets a person's attention more than hearing their name spoken.

Gen 18:10–11 Then He said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah.

Now that God has Sarah's attention, He promises Abraham that he would sire a son by Sarah; and the writer of this passage makes it clear that Sarah is beyond the age of childbearing and that Abraham is long past the age of being able to father a child.

Sarah is listening from the tent to what the men have to say, because she heard her name mentioned, and Jehovah promises Abraham that she would bear a son next year. Both Abraham and Sarah immediately thinks, "I'm too old and my spouse is too old as well."

And so laughs Sarah in her midst, to say, "After my wasting away, is to me pleasure [sexual delight]? And my lord is old."

Genesis
18:12

Therefore Sarah laughed to herself [lit., *in her midst*], saying [i.e., *thinking to herself*], "After I have been physically used up, will I have sexual enjoyment? Furthermore, my lord is old."

Therefore, Sarah laughed within, thinking, "Will I enjoy sexual pleasure at my age? Even my lord is too old for that!"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And Sarah <u>wondered</u> in her heart, saying After that I am old shall I have <u>conceptions</u> , and my lord Abraham is old? [JERUSALEM. And Sarah derided in her heart, saying, After that I am old, is it possible to return to the days of my youth, for me to have conception, and Abraham old?]
Latin Vulgate	And she laughed secretly, saying: After I am grown old, and my lord is an old man, shall I give myself to pleasure?
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so laughs Sarah in her midst, to say, "After my wasting away, is to me pleasure [sexual delight]? And my lord is old."
Peshitta (Syriac)	Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am grown old, <u>shall I renew my youth</u> , my lord being old also.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Sarah laughed in herself, saying, <u>The thing has not as yet happened to me</u> , even until now, and my lord is old.
Significant differences:	Sarah <i>laughed</i> ; she did not <i>wonder</i> , as in the targum. The targum also has <i>conception</i> rather than <i>pleasure</i> . A portion of the Greek seems quite different from the Hebrew. The same is true of the Syriac (however, these could simply be English translation euphemisms).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	So Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, I'm no longer able to have children and my husband's old.
Contemporary English V.	So she laughed and said to herself, "Now that I am worn out and my husband is old, will I really know such happiness?"
Easy English	So Sarah laughed. And she said to herself, 'I am an old woman. I am not able to have pleasure from sex any longer. My husband is very old.'
Easy-to-Read Version	So Sarah {did not believe what she heard. She} laughed to herself and said, "I am old and my husband is old. I am too old to have a baby."
Good News Bible (TEV)	So Sarah laughed to herself and said, "Now that I am old and worn out, can I still enjoy sex? And besides, my husband is old too."
<i>The Message</i>	Sarah laughed within herself, "An old woman like me? Get pregnant? With this old man of a husband?"
New Berkeley Version	...she laughed to herself, saying, "Connubial enjoyment for me, worn out as I am; and my master aged, too?"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	Sarah laughed in her center, saying, "I will have Eden after I deteriorated and my lord is-old?!"
Beck's American Translation	And so Sarah laughed to herself. "Now that I'm worn out," she said, "and my lord is old too, should I again enjoy myself?"
<i>God's Word</i> ™	And so Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, "Now that I've become old, will I enjoy myself again? What's more, my husband is old!"
New American Bible	So Sarah laughed* to herself and said, "Now that I am worn out and my husband is old, am I still to have sexual pleasure?"
NIRV	So she laughed to herself. She thought, "I'm worn out, and my husband is old. Can I really know the joy of having a baby?"
New Jerusalem Bible	So Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, 'Now that I am past the age of childbearing, and my husband is an old man, is pleasure to come my way again?'
New Simplified Bible	Therefore Sarah laughed within herself. She said to herself: »After I have grown old, shall I have a baby? My lord is old also.«

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Sarah, laughing to herself, said, Now that I am used up am I still to have pleasure, my husband himself being old?
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...so Sarah laughed in her apartment, saying, "After I am wasted, will there be pleasure for me, even when my master is old?"
HCSB	So she laughed to herself: "After I have become shriveled up and my lord is old, will I have delight?"
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "Now that I am withered, am I to have enjoyment—with my husband so old?"
Judaica Press Complete T.	And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have become worn out, will I have smooth flesh? And also, my master is old."
New Advent Bible	And she laughed secretly, saying: After I am grown old, and my lord is an old man, shall I give myself to pleasure?

NET Bible®

So Sarah laughed to herself, thinking [Heb "saying."], "After I am worn out will I have pleasure [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.], especially when my husband is old too [The word "too" has been added in the translation for stylistic reasons.]?"

NIV – UK

So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

Therefore Sarah laughed to herself, saying, After I have become aged shall I have pleasure and delight, my lord (husband), being old also?

Concordant Literal Version

And laughing is Sarah within herself saying, "After my decadence shall luxury come to me? It has not come to me till now. My lord also is old.

Heritage Bible

And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have failed from age shall there be to me pleasure, and my lord being old?

Syndein

Therefore Sarah laughed {tsachaq - Isaac'ed - laughed inside herself - where 'Isaac' will be formed - Humor of God} within herself {NOT out loud}, saying {amar}, "After I am 'worn out'/'physically unable' shall I have 'sexual relationship'/'sexual pleasure' {'eden - the 'garden of eden' was the 'garden of sexual pleasure'} my lord {Abraham} being old also?"

A Voice in the Wilderness

Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, Being worn out, shall I be delighted, my lord, having also become old?

World English Bible

Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old will I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

Young's Updated LT

And Sarah laughs in her heart, saying, "After I have waxed old I have had pleasure! —my lord also is old!" Recall that *Young's Literal Translation* is out of whack still.

The gist of this verse:

Sarah, while listening to these men talk, laughs, and thinks to herself, how can she and her husband have sexual pleasure at their age.

Genesis 18:12a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsâchaq (צַחַק) [pronounced tsaw-KHAHKH]	to laugh; to mock; to play	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6711 BDB #850
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW]	princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

Genesis 18:12a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
qereb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced KEH-re ^b v]	<i>midst, among, from among [a group of people]; an [actual, physical] inward part; the inner person with respect to thinking and emotion; as a faculty of thinking or emotion; heart, mind, inner being; entrails [of sacrificial animals]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7130 BDB #899

Translation: Therefore, Sarah laughed to herself [lit., in her midst],...

The first preposition is qereb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced KEH-re^bv] and it has to do with the nearest part or the center. This may be translated that Sarah laughed *in, within, or to* herself. Sarah is at the tent flap listening to what is being said, interested in the company there, and what news they might have brought. However, as soon as Y^ehowah says that He will return and they will have a son—specifically her and Abraham—this strikes her as funny.

You will recall in the previous chapter, God suggested this to Abraham and he fell down and laughed. However, nevertheless, he allowed himself to be circumcised and circumcised all the males who were with him.

This time, Sarah laughs, but she does it internally, quietly, so that she knew that no one could hear her.



Genesis 18:12 (a graphic); from [ima on and off the bima blog](#); accessed January 1, 2014.

McGee: *That is, Sarah asks, "Is it possible that I will have a son?" - and she laughs. Now what kind of laughter is this? I think this is the laughter which says that it is just too good to be true - that's all. Again, I'm sure that most of us have had experiences like this. God has been so good to us on a certain occasion that we just laughed. Something happened that was just too good to be true, and that was the way Sarah laughed. She is saying, "This is something just too good to be true. It just can't happen to me!"*²⁰

²⁰ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed January 2, 2014.

Genesis 18:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'achârêy (אַחֲרָי) [pronounced ah-kuh-RAY]	<i>behind, after; following; after that, afterwards; hinder parts</i>	preposition/substantive; plural construct form	Strong's #310 BDB #29
The preposition 'achârêy appears to have a rare substantive use as well; here, it can mean <i>the end of, the butt of, the end portion; the back</i> .			
bâlâh (הִלָּב) [pronounced baw-LAW]	<i>to fall, to fall away; to waste away [physically, mentally]; to become completely and fully used up; to fail; to be brought to nothing</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1086 BDB #115

Translation: ...saying [i.e., thinking to herself], "After I have been physically used up,...

Although we have the words *to say* here, what is happening is, she is speaking to herself or within herself; in other words, she is thinking.

Genesis 18:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'ed ^o nâh (הַנְּדִיעַ) [pronounced gehd-NAW]	<i>pleasure, sexual delight</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5730 BDB #726

There is a masculine and feminine form of this word. The meanings are similar. Some lexicons treat them as the same word; some treat them as different words. They have the same Strong's #.

Genesis 18:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
The masculine form of this noun is 'êden (עֵדֶן) [pronounced ĠAY-den] ²¹ , which means <i>pleasure; luxury, dainty, delight</i> . Strong's #5730 BDB #726. You may recognize this word from the beginning of the book of Genesis: 'Ēden (עֵדֶן) [pronounced ĠAY-den], which means <i>pleasure</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Eden</i> . Strong's #5731 BDB #727. It is the same word, just the masculine form rather than the feminine form. ²²			

Translation: ...will I have sexual enjoyment?

Shall I have pleasure is the verb *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which means *come to pass, to be, to become*. Sexual pleasure is a hapax legomenon (plural: hapax legomena) in the Old Testament. It is the word 'ed^enâh (עֵדֶן) [pronounced *geh-d-NAW*]. This word is related to *Eden*, which was "Garden of Delights." This is the subject. The verb is in the Qal perfect, 3rd person feminine singular, 1st person singular suffix. The subject is actually *sexual pleasure* and that portion of Scripture is actually *Shall sexual pleasure come to pass for me*. It sounds as though Sarah is a tiny bit skeptical concerning what Jesus Christ had to say (although neither she nor Abraham realized that it was the Lord yet).

Sarah is not asking a question, but stating a strong doubt in the form of a question, which does not require an answer from anyone, including herself (**erotesis**).

Genesis 18:12d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i>]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated <i>Adonai, adonai</i></i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10

There are actually 3 forms of this word: 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; 'ădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; and 'ădônîy (אֲדֹנֵי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NEE*].

²¹ Quite frankly, I did not really know how to convey a guttural sound which comes from the back of the throat, so I have used ġ and Ġ to indicate the guttural sound. It sounds a little bit like hocking a loogie (and I am amazed that terminology is actually available through Google).

²² Some Hebrew scholars treat these as different words; some treat them as the same word. You will note that their Strong's #'s are identical.

Genesis 18:12d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יִם) [pronounced *eem*], an older form of the *pluralis excellentiæ* (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1st person singular suffix, hence, *my Lord* (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from *my lords*).

There are points of grammar which speak to the options above, but not so that we may unequivocally choose between the three. (1) When we find 'ădônay (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAH*] (note the difference of the vowel ending), it always means *my lords*. (2) Jehovah calls Himself 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*] in Job 28:28 Isaiah 8:7; however, many of the Job manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* and 8 ancient Isaiah manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* instead. This suggests, that either ancient Scribes were confused about this form of *Adonai* or that they simply substituted *Adonai* for *Y^ehowah*, which was not an abnormal practice (in oral readings, the ancient Tetragrammaton was not spoken, but *Lord* was said instead). And even if *every* manuscript read *Adonai*, then we may also reasonably conclude that one member of the Trinity is addressing another member of the Trinity (although the idea of God saying *my Lord* would be theologically confusing, even if addressing another member of the Trinity; although Jesus did refer to God the Father as *our Father*).

This is exactly the same form of this word that we find back in v. 3.

zâqên (צָקַן) [pronounced <i>zaw-KANE</i>]	<i>to become old, to become aged</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2204 BDB #278
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BDB suggests that this could also be the adjective:

zâqên (צָקַן) [pronounced <i>zaw-KANE</i>]	<i>old, elderly, aged</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
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There is little difference between this being the verb or the adjective (which would imply a verb).

Translation: *Furthermore, my lord is old.*

Literally, this reads, *And Sarah was laughing within herself, saying, "After my being used up, pleasure is [or, has come into being] for me and my husband has become old."*

Sarah is listening near the tent flap, and this strikes her as quite funny. It has been years since she and her husband had sex. He was certainly no longer capable of fathering a child; and she was unable to give birth to a child. God had made many promises to Abraham and these promises all hinge upon Sarah bearing Abraham's child; and that is clearly impossible.

What is being said causes her to laugh to herself (literally, *in her midst*). So Sarah is being polite; she cannot be seen and she is not laughing out loud.

Here is why she is laughing. Abraham, a month or so earlier, was given this promise, and he agreed to be circumcised. At some point, after a month or so, the pain had subsided, Abraham had healed, and he was good to go. Except that he was not.

The word *pleasure* is the Hebrew noun 'ed^enâh (עֲדָנָה) [pronounced *geh*d-*NAW*], which means, *pleasure, sexual delight*. Strong's #5730 BDB #726. The masculine form of this noun is 'êden (עֵדֶן) [pronounced *ĠAY*-den]²³, which means *pleasure; luxury, dainty, delight*. Strong's #5730 BDB #726. You may recognize this word from the beginning of the book of Genesis: 'Ēden (עֵדֶן) [pronounced *ĠAY*-den], which means *pleasure*; and is transliterated *Eden*. Strong's #5731 BDB #727. It is the same word, just the masculine form rather than the feminine form.²⁴ So, this is something you probably did not expect to find in the Bible—Sarah is associating bearing a child with sex, which is associated with pleasure. That is nearly the same word as we find back in the very beginning, when Adam and the woman resided in the Garden of Eden.

If this is actually a separate, but related word, then this would be known as an **hapax legomenon** [pronounced, *HAP*-aks *li*-*GOM*-uh-*non*, also, *hey*-*PAKS*] (plural: hapax legomena [pronounced: *HAP*-aks *li*-*GOM*-uh-*nuh*, and *hey*-*PAKS*]), which is *a word or phrase that appears only once in a manuscript, document, or particular area of literature*.²⁵ Such words can be difficult to translate; however, often, as in this situation, this has both a masculine form and a verb form, so taking all of these words together in context, we are generally able to determine their meanings.

In the Greek, hapax legomena are even easier to define because (1) there is a lot of literature out there written in Greek which has been uncovered; and (2) often, these are compound words made up of other words that are more common. And, just like in the Hebrew, there are often cognates which can be looked at as well. Also, we have seen these same words translated into Latin and into other ancient languages, so that we have a myriad of ways of determining the meanings of all these ancient words.

My point in all of this—and you may have wondered this from time to time—how exactly are we able to translate Old Testament Hebrew into English? Modern Hebrew is similar to ancient Hebrew, but they are not quite the same language (the same is true of Greek). However, scholars have literally spent their entire lives delving into the actual meanings of these words, which have resulted in great lexicons like Brown-Driver-Briggs and Gesenius.

If you will allow me one more tangent, the scholarly approach to the Bible is based upon hundreds of years of research and thousands upon thousands of scholars. Great Bible teachers like L. S. Chafer, R. B. Thieme, Jr., J. Vernon McGee, Norman Geisler or Harry Ironsides would be nobodies without standing on the shoulders of linguistic, historical, and Biblical scholars who preceded them in time. And, so there is no misunderstanding, every new generation must pick up the flag and advance it. When a generation does not, there is great suffering which results because human viewpoint (Romans 12:2 Galatians 5:1 Colossians 3:2), heavily influenced by the doctrine of demons (1Timothy 4:1–2), influences all that occurs.

Genesis 18:12 **Therefore Sarah laughed to herself [lit., in her midst], saying [i.e., thinking to herself], “After I have been physically used up, will I have sexual enjoyment? Furthermore, my lord is old.”** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:12 **Therefore, Sarah laughed within, thinking, “Will I enjoy sexual pleasure at my age? Even my lord is too old for that!”** (Kukis paraphrase)

²³ Quite frankly, I did not really know how to convey a guttural sound which comes from the back of the throat, so I have used *ġ* and *Ġ* to indicate the guttural sound. It sounds a little bit like hocking a loogie (and I am amazed that terminology is actually available through Google).

²⁴ Some Hebrew scholars treat these as different words; some treat them as the same word. You will note that their Strong's #'s are identical.

²⁵ From <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hapax+legomenon> accessed April 24, 2012.

I have mentioned human viewpoint on a number of occasions in this study, without really delving into it.

Human Viewpoint Thinking versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking

1. Most Christians think with a variety of influences—they have the norms and standards that they were raised with, societal norms and standards, and some of what the Bible teaches.
2. After knowing how to get back into fellowship, the key to the Christian life is being able to think like God. **Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. For I say through the grace which has been given to me to every one who is among you, stop thinking of yourself in terms of arrogance beyond what you ought to think, but think in terms of sanity for the purpose of being rational without illusion as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from doctrine.** (Romans 12:2–3).
3. Very simply stated, divine viewpoint thinking comes from the Bible doctrine in your human spirit and human viewpoint thinking comes from your human soul.
4. A person can be a new believer or an unbeliever and have divine establishment thinking, which are the norms and standards of God designed to preserve a nation. Many times, unbelieving children can learn these norms and standards from doctrinally straight parents; or some people can acquire divine establishment norms and standards from having been in the military.
5. Arrogance is both a mental attitude sin and an indication of human viewpoint. Believers are warned **But He [God] gives greater grace. Therefore [Scripture] says, "God opposes the proud [or, arrogant], but he gives grace to the humble [or, grace oriented]."** (James 4:6). See also Romans 12:3
6. One form of arrogance is thinking that your norms and standards are superior to those found in the Bible. Your own norms and standards are not divinely inspired; you learned some of these from your parents and these were modified by the society in which you live (which are affected by your friendships, contacts, the laws that you are subject to, your education, along with advertising, movies, television, literature and art). An example of a societal norm which I have seen change from being correct to incorrect is society's view toward homosexuality—when I was young, it was viewed as sin, abnormal and distasteful. Today, much of society believes that homosexuality is simply how a person is born (which is not exactly correct) and, therefore, not a sin (again, incorrect).
7. There is no place in the plan of God for human viewpoint thinking. **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways," declares the LORD** (Isaiah 55:8). **Therefore, all who are mature should think this way [as Paul has been teaching]. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this to you also [through the continued teaching of Bible doctrine] (Philip. 3:15). Keep thinking objectively about things above [divine viewpoint] and not about things on the earth [human viewpoint] (Colossians 3:2).**
8. Only the believer in fellowship can learn to think like God, building doctrine upon doctrine. **But the unregenerate man of the highest intellectual attainments is not given access to the things of the Spirit of God, for to him they are folly, and he is not able to come to know them because they are understood in a spiritual realm. But the spiritual man investigates indeed all things, but he himself is not being probed by anyone. For who has come to know experientially the Lord's mind, he who will instruct Him? But as for us, we have the mind of Christ** (1Corinthians 2:12–13). Having the mind of Christ is divine viewpoint, and the apostles were able to teach divine viewpoint.
9. Pastor teachers should make every effort to be teaching from the Word of God to their congregation, instead of human viewpoint. Paul told the Corinthians: **My language and the message I preached were not adorned with pleasing words of worldly wisdom, but they were attended with proof and power given by the Spirit, so that your faith might not be in men's wisdom, but in God's power** (1Corinthians 2:4–5).
10. Acquiring divine viewpoint thinking is a day-by-day process of learning the Word of God. You do not suddenly decide, "I am going to start thinking like God thinks;" and then it happens. You get exposed to

Human Viewpoint Thinking versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking

human viewpoint approximately 23 hours/day (minus your sleep time); and, ideally, you get exposed to Bible doctrine 1 hour per day. Over time, Bible doctrine will overtake human viewpoint in your thinking.

See http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=184 for more information on this topic.

In our passage, Sarah is exhibiting human viewpoint thinking; and Abraham shows divine viewpoint thinking.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Gen 18:12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"

By the words that Sarah is using, we know that she and Abraham had sex in the past. It was pleasurable to her. She says that, asking, "Will I have sexual pleasure (at my age)?" It seems reasonable that Abraham shared the promise with her, she knew about him being circumcised—she probably held back her opinion on that—and here it is, a couple months later and nothing has happened.

The gist of this passage makes me think that some initial attempts were made to have sexual relations, but nothing happened. Sexual regeneration has not taken place yet. You will recall that circumcision is all about regeneration. That is what it means. Circumcision is a ritual; regeneration is the reality. Both Abraham and Sarah had been spiritually regenerated; however, they had not yet been physically regenerated to set up the parallel situation.

Circumcision leads to new life, which life will include children. However, this had not yet kicked in.

So, Sarah had thought about sex; she and Abraham probably tried it; and nothing happened—for either of them. So she now asks herself, "Will I have sexual pleasure (at my age)?"

Abraham had been circumcised, and the pain was no longer an issue and he had physically healed; however, he is still too old to have sex. Physically, that has not happened yet.

Gen 18:12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"

Interestingly enough, I could find nothing in the Hebrew that indicates that this is a question; however, that is the way that nearly every translator renders this as a question: "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" We indicate a sentence is a question with certain specific words and with a question mark; but there are no punctuation marks in the Hebrew. As I have mentioned before, the most ancient Hebrew manuscripts would simply be a series of consonants with no spaces from beginning to end. The Hebrew uses two primary words to begin a sentence, and that tells you that sentence is a question. Those words are not found here.

The very end of this verse reads, "And my lord is old." Sarah is still thinking all of this. She is not speaking out loud. Abraham is an old guy. He is nearly 100 years old; and all the standard equipment that he came with is no longer operational—there is nothing to indicate that he will sire a child. This seems to be true, even after being circumcised.

In other words, Sarah is expressing some doubts about this whole thing—not out loud. And yet Abraham, when God told him to get circumcised, that same day, Abraham was circumcised. We are later told: **Yet, Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully**

persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform (Romans 4:20-21). Here, Abraham was thinking with divine viewpoint.

This is what we have studied so far:

Gen 18:1–12 (MKJV mostly) And Jehovah appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, and he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day. Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed toward the ground. And he said, "My Lord [or, lords], if now I have found grace in Your sight, do not pass away, I pray, from Your servant. Let a little water, I pray, be brought, and wash Your feet, and rest under the tree. And I will bring a bite of bread, and will comfort your hearts. After that You shall pass on. For this is why You have come to Your servant [i.e., this is why you just happened to walk past my tent]." And they said, "Do so, as you have said." And Abraham quickly went into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal; knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran out to the herd and brought a calf, tender and good. And he gave it to a young man. And he hurried to dress it. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they ate. They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "Behold, she is in the tent." Then He said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were both old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah [Sarah was no longer fertile]. Therefore, Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"

God has appeared to Abraham, but there are several things which are different from God's previous appearances to Abraham. First of all, it is not clear when Abraham recognizes that this is God. Secondly, God is there with two angels, which has not happened before. Thirdly, God will directly involve Sarah this time. Insofar as we know, God has not appeared to Sarah before, nor has He spoken to her before. Finally, God is there to lay judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah (and 3 smaller cities).

Gen 18:12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"

Genesis 18:12 is what Sarah thought. She did not speak out loud. Now, God will reveal that He is God.

And so says Y^ehowah unto Abraham, "For why this, has laughed Sarah, to say, 'Will indeed I give birth and I have become old?'"

Genesis
18:13

Then Y^ehowah said to Abraham, "Why is it that [lit., why this] Sarah laughed? [Why did she] say, 'Will I indeed give birth though I am old?' "

Then Jehovah said to Abraham, "Why is it that Sarah just laughed? Why did she previously say, 'Will I indeed give birth even though I am old?' "

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

And the Lord said to Abraham, Why has Sarah so laughed, saying, Can it be in truth that I will bear, being old?

Latin Vulgate

And the Lord said to Abraham: Why did Sara laugh, saying: Shall I, who am an old woman, bear a child indeed?

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Y ^e howah unto Abraham, "For why this, has laughed Sarah, to say, 'Will indeed I give birth and I have become old?'"
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I truly bear a child, when I am so old?
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord said to Abraham, Why is it that Sarah has laughed in herself, saying, Shall I then indeed bear? But I have grown old.
Significant differences:	None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Me give birth? At my age?'"
Contemporary English V.	The LORD asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Does she doubt that she can have a child in her old age?"
Easy English	Then the *Lord said this to Abraham: 'Sarah laughed. She thought that she was too old to have a son. So she laughed.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Sarah laughed and said she was too old to have a baby."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then the LORD asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Can I really have a child when I am so old?'"
<i>The Message</i>	GOD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh saying, 'Me? Have a baby? An old woman like me?'"
New Life Bible	Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'How can I give birth to a child when I am so old?'"
New Living Translation	Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?'"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And at that, the Lord asked AbraHam, 'Why is SarAh laughing inside herself and asking, <i>Will I give birth? I'm already old.</i>
Ancient Roots Translinear	Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why this laughing with Sarah saying, 'Truly, even I am-old! <i>Can I beget?</i> '"
<i>God's Word</i> TM	The LORD asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Can I really have a child now that I'm old?'"
New American Bible	But the LORD said to Abraham: "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really bear a child, old as I am?'"
Today's NIV	Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?'"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And the Lord said, Why was Sarah laughing and saying, Is it possible for me, being old, to give birth to a child?
Complete Jewish Bible	ADONAI said to Avraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and ask, 'Am I really going to bear a child when I am so old?'"
Ferar-Fenton Bible	The Lord consequently said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? saying, 'Shall I suckle a child when I am old?'"

HCSB	But the LORD asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Can I really have a baby when I'm old?'"
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Then the LORD said, to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I in truth bear a child, old as I am?'"
NET Bible®	The LORD said to Abraham, "Why [Heb "Why, this?" The demonstrative pronoun following the interrogative pronoun is enclitic, emphasizing the Lord's amazement: "Why on earth did Sarah laugh?"] did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really [The Hebrew construction uses both האף (ha'af) and אמתא ('umnam): "Indeed, truly, will I have a child?"] have a child when I am old?'"
The Scriptures 1998	And יהוה said to Ab?raham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I truly have a child, since I am old?'"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Yahweh to Abraham, "Why this? Sarah laughs, saying, 'Indeed, truly, shall I bear when I am old?'"
Context Group Version	And YHWH said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I certainly bear a child, who am old?.
exeGeses companion Bible	And Yah Veh says to Abraham, Why this? Sarah laughs, saying, I - truly birth? I - aged?
Heritage Bible	And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh at this, saying, Shall I who am old surely bear a child?
LTHB	And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why has Sarah laughed at this, saying, Indeed, truly shall I bear, even I who am old?
Syndein	And Jehovah/God {Jesus Christ as one of the Strangers - a Christophany} said {amar} unto Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh {tsachaq} {God heard this but Abraham did not so he is confused here - Sarah should now realize this is the Lord}, saying {amar}, 'Shall I of a surety bear a child, when I am old?'"
World English Bible	Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Will I really bear a child, yet I am old?'"
Young's Updated LT	And Jehovah says unto Abraham, "Why is this? Sarah has laughed, saying, Is it true really—I bear—and I am aged? Is any thing too wonderful for Jehovah? at the appointed time I return unto you, about the time of life, and Sarah has a son."

The gist of this verse: God asks Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Will I really bear a child being so old?'"

Genesis 18:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Genesis 18:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'el (אל) [pronounced <i>eh</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Ab ^e râhâm (אברהם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw- HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâh (מה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
Lâmed + mâh can be rendered <i>why, for what reason, to what purpose, for what purpose</i> , indicating an interrogatory sentence. BDB also offers the rendering <i>lest</i> . Gesenius, perhaps for this passage alone (1Chronicles 15:13), offers the rendering <i>on account of [that] which, because that</i> .			
zeh (זה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
tsâchaq (צחק) [pronounced <i>tsaw- KHAHKH</i>]	<i>to laugh; to mock; to play</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6711 BDB #850
Sârâh (שרה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979

Translation: Then Y^ehowah said to Abraham, “Why is it that [lit., *why this*] Sarah laughed?”

I like that way I translated these words, but the combination of these 3 particles is not given a particular translation by Gesenius. Literally, they would be *for why this?* But, the essentially, God is simply asking Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh?”

At this point, we do find God's name, Y^ehowah, in the text. His name had not yet been given in this chapter except in v. 1. This suggests that, Abraham knows by this time that this is God. This was established for us at the very beginning; and now Abraham is clearly aware to whom he is speaking.

Abraham is thinking, “I didn't hear Sarah laugh; I didn't hear her say anything.” But God did.

Sarah did not say these words from v. 12 out loud. She did not even mouth them. This is what she was thinking, and it made her laugh, which she did so quietly that Abraham could not hear her. However, God is omniscient, so He did hear her—even her thoughts. Contrast that with the question, moments ago of, “Where is your wife Sarah?” (which words were spoken aloud in order to get her attention).

Genesis 18:13b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hă (ה) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .		Strong's #none BDB #209
'aph (אף) [pronounced ahf]	<i>in fact, furthermore, also, yea, even, indeed; even though</i>	a conjunction which signifies <i>addition</i> or <i>emphasis</i>	Strong's #637 BDB #64
This word appears to have two different purposes: (1) A surprise is then mentioned or the unexpected is said. (2) A reference is made to a preceding sentence and it is expanded or emphasized and we would translate this word <i>yea, à fortiori, the more so, how much more</i> (following an affirmative clause), <i>how much less</i> (following a negative clause), <i>furthermore, in fact</i> .			
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ânîy (אני) [pronounced aw-NEE]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
zâqên (זָקַן) [pronounced zaw-KANE]	<i>to become old, to become aged</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2204 BDB #278

Translation: [Why did she] say, ‘Will I indeed give birth though I am old?’ ”

When I first read this, I was a bit confused. Sarah did not say this in her heart. What she just thought was: “After I have been physically used up, will I have sexual enjoyment? Furthermore, my lord is old.” She did not just say, “Will I indeed give birth even though I am old?” Let me suggest two possibilities: (1) She was there thinking for awhile and this is one of the things that she thought. We only got a little bit of Sarah’s thoughts recorded. (2) When Abraham told her earlier what God had promised, back from Genesis 17, she said, “Will I indeed give birth though I am old?” I believe that the latter is the case. This is more effective because Abraham heard her

say it (she said it to him) and she, who is listening to all this through the tent flap, recalls saying this exact same thing to Abraham 2 or 3 months ago.

Genesis 18:13 Then Y^ehowah said to Abraham, “Why is it that [lit., *why this*] Sarah laughed? [Why did she] say, ‘Will I indeed give birth though I am old?’ ” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:13 Then Jehovah said to Abraham, “Why is it that Sarah just laughed? Why did she previously say, ‘Will I indeed give birth even though I am old?’ ” (Kukis paraphrase)

Whether she laughed then or not, we don’t know. But sure Abraham told her about what God had said, and her response “Will I indeed give birth though I am old?” can be understood in two ways. One way, that Abraham may have understood, “Oh, God said that I am going to give birth, even though I am old?” However, what she may have meant was, “Oh, Abraham, you crazy old coot, you don’t think I am going to give birth, being this old, do you?” Have you ever had a woman who said one thing to you—intentionally ambiguous—and you understood it in the way that she wanted you to take it, which was not what she was really saying?

In either case, God heard what she said, God knew what she was thinking, and God knew where she was right at this moment.

When people think, a great many things go through their minds. Sarah is thinking both about conceiving and having a child and she is thinking about the sexual pleasure involved in which must first take place. God the Son does give her a certain amount of privacy and just mentions her thoughts concerning bearing a child. God the Holy Spirit in Scripture reveals to us that was not the only thing which ran through her head. Abraham is stunned; he doesn't even know that Sarah is listening; he doesn't know what Jesus Christ is talking about. Sarah is even more shocked—she's hidden from view, absolutely quiet, intently listening to a conversation which partially involves her; and she hasn't said a word; but her thoughts are as perspicuous to the omniscience of God as are her actions. We cannot hide what we are thinking from God. Furthermore, this verse makes it clear to us who one of the three people are who have come to visit Abraham (as does v. 1).

Although Genesis 18:12–13 are never listed as being contradictory, many so-called Bible contradictions are very similar to what we find here. Sarah says: “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?” Then Y^ehowah says: “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’” Obviously, these are not the same words. So, is there a contradiction here?

The explanation here is obvious; Sarah was thinking a number of things: “Will I bear a child at my age? Will I have sexual pleasure with my husband and I being this old?” Only a portion of what she was thinking is recorded for us in Scripture. It is possible that only a portion of what Jehovah Elohim said is recorded in Scripture. However, my guess is, few of you reading this even noticed the difference between vv. 12–13 until now. Most of the alleged contradictions between the gospels are like this. Don’t be overly concerned if some atheist directs you to some web page where they list dozens or even hundreds of “Bible contradictions.” Personally, I can answer about half of them off the top of my head, and a half of those that remain with a modicum of research.

As an aside, one thing I have noticed about such sites is, they will rarely update or change any of their “Bible contradictions.” That is, you can offer a simple explanation for one of their contradictions, email it to them, but they will not fix that on their website (nor will they add a footnote, saying, *some explain this contradiction in this way...*). Their intention is to shake your faith, not to be honest or honorable. So, for most such websites, the more contradictions they can list, the better, whether easy explanations exist or not. No doubt, they justify this in their own minds, thinking, “Well, that’s just one interpretation; I see it as a contradiction.” Or, whatever. People love to justify themselves—especially when they are wrong.

I have connected to some anti-Bible websites in facebook, and many of them will list various Bible contradictions, as well as problems that they had with the Bible. Not one time was a comment of mine answered with, "Well, you're right; that would explain the apparent contradiction." Of course, they never removed a graphic which disparaged the Bible. However, after posting quite a number of times, I was no longer allowed to post there.

In the example above, one website heads my explanation off at the pass: *This [sort of explanation] is used when one verse says "there was a" and another says "there was b," so they decide there was "a" AND "b"--which is said nowhere. This makes them happy, since it doesn't say there WASN'T "a+b."*²⁶ So, preemptively, this Bible site has decided that Sarah cannot think more than one thought—she thinks this one, exact thought, and no more; and, therefore, a passage like this is a contradiction.

However, any reasonable explanation—even if it is incorrect—should remove a contradiction of text. A true contradiction asserts that two narratives are contradictory; that they both *cannot* be true at the same time. If there is an explanation, such as the one that I have given here (Sarah thought more than one thing), the contradiction of text is removed. When you show that two narratives are compatible, that they both explain what has happened, just from different vantage points, then those narratives are no longer contradictory. A reasonable explanation must exist to remove a contradiction of passages, even if it is not the correct explanation.

You may or may not realize, but hundreds and perhaps thousands of books have been written specifically to cause believers to lose their faith in the Bible. Sometimes the authors make claims like, "This book will put to rest forever the idea that the Bible is the Word of God." I have at least one book like this, written maybe 40 or 50 years ago. The Bible is still going strong, and I can almost guarantee you that you have never heard of this author or his book ever before.²⁷ In any case, a search on Amazon books for "Bible contradictions" yields over 2000 results, most of which appear to be books which answer Bible contradictions rather than present them. If this is a topic of interest to you, I would recommend Geisler and Howe, simply because I have found the books written by Geisler to be scholarly, well-written and informative.

I simply took the first five listed at EvilBible.com

Examples of Bible Contradictions from Evil Bible

Alleged Contradiction	Explanation
God is satisfied with his works. Gen 1:31	When God restored all the earth, He was pleased with His works. However, man was corrupted, choosing against God, rather than for God, and all mankind, except for Noah's family, had become corrupted (as you will recall, mankind and angels intermingled at that time).
God is dissatisfied with his works. Genesis 6:6	Therefore, what God created, when man was in innocence was good; but what angelic corruption had done to the earth (allowed by man's volition) was awful. Angels corrupted all mankind.

²⁶ From http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/jim_meritt/bible-contradictions.html accessed May 9, 2012.

²⁷ Some of my books are packed up, so I can't give you the actual name or author. Sorry about that. :)

Examples of Bible Contradictions from Evil Bible

Alleged Contradiction	Explanation
God dwells in chosen temples 2Chronicles 7:12,16	In the Old Testament, God revealed Himself and manifested Himself in many ways. Throughout Genesis, so far, He has appeared to Abraham as a man (Genesis 18:1–2). He will appear to Moses as a burning bush, as a cloud that leads the people of Israel by day, etc. The Temple represented Jesus Christ; as did all of the things within and without the Temple; and, therefore, God took up a specialized residence there.
God dwells not in temples Acts 7:48	However, in the New Testament, God reveals Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ, where He becomes the God-man forever. Therefore, having come in human form and died for our sins, there is no reason for God to appear again in any shadow form.
God dwells in light 1Tim 6:16	The fundamental difference between the Old and New Testaments is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Prior to His incarnation, Jesus was revealed in shadow form—that is, through the animal sacrifices (Genesis 3:21 4:3–4 8:20–21) and later through the Tabernacle and then the Temple (the key to 1Kings 18). Psalm 18:7–17 speaks of the judgment of God against David’s enemies, and imagery such as fire, clouds and thunder are used.
God dwells in darkness 1Kings 8:12 Psalm 18:11 97:2	In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is revealed, the God-man, so that we understand exactly what is going on. God is revealed; God is light and Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12).
God is seen and heard. Genesis 3:9–10 32:30 Exodus 24:9-11 33:23, 11 Isaiah 6:1	God the Second Person reveals Himself in the Old Testament in a myriad of ways; and He is Jesus Christ in the New Testament. As Jesus Christ, God is not simply revealing Himself in a different form, but God actually becomes true humanity.
God is invisible and cannot be heard. Ex 33:20 John 1:18 5:37 1Tim 6:16	God the Father is Spirit, Who cannot be seen. Since God the Father is a Spirit, God the Son reveals Him.
God is tired and rests Exodus 31:17	Here, we are comparing an anthropathism to that which is true of God. An anthropathism uses a human characteristic to help explain God’s thoughts, words or actions. By the way, we speak in this sort of way all the time. We speak of the sun rising and setting, but the sun does not rise and set, and most people who have the slightest exposure to science understand this. And yet, scientists themselves will use this sort of language of accommodation. A Bible critic will excuse this sort of usage by himself and his friends; but never allow it to be in the Bible. All anthropathisms, to the skeptic, is an automatic contradiction.
God is never tired and never rests Isaiah 40:28	

Here is the point; there may be some better, more imaginative contradictions listed at this and other websites; however, if this is all they have, and these are the first 5 listed (which I would expect to be listed in order to grab the attention of the reader); then they are a lousy beginning. I have at least one book of Bible contradictions and have been to several sites, but I can usually answer most of all of the first ten listed contradictions without using any outside material or using google.

At the same time, the proponents of these websites will mostly argue these points, as if they are Bible scholars (whereas, most of them just cut and paste their material from another website or they took it from another book). Some know the Bible a little; most do not. But, one thing they will never do (at least, in my experience); is they will never *retract* a single allegation, no matter how clearly wrong that allegation is. Most of the time, their justification is, "Well, maybe you are interpreting your Bible that way; but I interpret it this way, and that gives me a contradiction."

Personally, I am not going to spend my time collecting alleged Bible contradictions and answering them. That is not my spiritual gift. However, there are a number of books out there which do this. The main thing is, as a believer, don't allow yourself to be unraveled if you read a couple of Bible contradictions that you cannot answer. There could be a myriad of explanations for them.

These examples were taken from <http://www.evilbible.com/Biblical%20Contradictions.htm> on May 9, 2012. They are the first five listed.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Is doing too difficult from Y^ehowah a word? For the specific time, I will return unto you as the time living; and to Sarah, a son."

Genesis
18:14

Is [this] matter more extraordinary than Y^ehowah? Regarding the specific time [for this birth], I will return to you, as the time [of] renewal [i.e., *Spring*]; and Sarah will have a son [lit., *to Sarah, a son*]."

Is there anything too difficult for Jehovah? Regarding this specific time, I will return to you in the Spring, and then, Sarah will have a son."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	Is it possible <u>to</u> <u>hide</u> anything from before the Lord? At the <u>gracious</u> time I will return to you, in the time when you shall be revived, and Sarah shall have a son.
Latin Vulgate	Is there any thing hard to God? According to appointment I will return to you at this same time, life accompanying, and Sara shall have a son.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Is doing too difficult from Y ^e howah a word? For the specific time, I will return unto you as the time living; and to Sarah, a son."
Peshitta (Syriac)	Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at this season, and Sarah your wife shall be with child, and shall have a son.
Septuagint (Greek)	Shall anything be impossible with the Lord? At the appointed time I shall return to you, and Sarah shall have a son.

Significant differences: The first verb is difficult; the targum seems to have missed it. A *word* can be translated a *thing, anything*. The second-to-the-last phrase is difficult; and the targum seems to give this a good translation.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	I am the LORD! There is nothing too difficult for me. I'll come back next year at the time I promised, and Sarah will already have a son."
Easy English	But nothing is too difficult for the *Lord to do. I will come back to you next year. I will come at the time that I have decided. Sarah will have a son.
Easy-to-Read Version	Is anything too hard for the Lord? No! I will come again in the spring when I said I would. And your wife Sarah will have a son."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Is anything too hard for the LORD? As I said, nine months from now I will return, and Sarah will have a son."
<i>The Message</i>	Is anything too hard for GOD? I'll be back about this time next year and Sarah will have a baby."
New Berkeley Version	Is anything beyond the LORD's reach? At the appointed time [Appointment made, Genesis 17:21. God may have thought so within Himself, as some surmise, but more likely, He expressed Himself to Abraham. Abraham's walk with Him was evidence of hospitality, observed in Eastern lands more than here.] I will return to you, at the reviving season and Sarah will have a son.
New Century Version	Is anything too hard for the Lord? No! I will return to you at the right time a year from now, and Sarah will have a son."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Is there anything that is impossible for Jehovah? I will return to you [next year] in this season and Sarah will have a son!"
Ancient Roots Translinear	Yahweh's word accomplishes! I will return to you for a meeting with Sarah in the period of the son's life."
Beck's American Translation	Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? I will come back to you at about the time it takes to have a child, and then Sarah will have a son."
Christian Community Bible	Is there anything that is impossible for God? At this same time next year I will return and Sarah by then will have a son."
<i>God's Word</i> TM	Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will come back to you next year at this time, and Sarah will have a son."

Genesis 18:14 (graphic) from [Ministry127](#); accessed January 1, 2014.

New American Bible	Is anything too marvelous for the LORD to do? At the appointed time, about this time next year, I will return to you, and Sarah will have a son." Mt 19:26; Mk 10:27; Lk 1:37; 18:27; Rom 4:21.
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New Jerusalem Bible	Nothing is impossible for Yahweh. I shall come back to you at the same time next year and Sarah will have a son.'
Revised English Bible	Is anything impossible for the LORD? In due season, at this time next year, I shall come back to you, and Sarah will have a son.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Is there any wonder which the Lord is not able to do? At the time I said, in the spring, I will come back to you, and Sarah will have a child.
Complete Jewish Bible	Is anything too hard for ADONAI? At the time set for it, at this season next year, I will return to you; and Sarah will have a son."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Is it a great thing for the EVER-LIVING to say, 'At such a time, I will return to you the period of youth, and give a son to Sarah'?"
HCSB	Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son."
Judaica Press Complete T.	Is anything hidden from the Lord? At the appointed time, I will return to you, at this time next year and Sarah will have a son."
NET Bible®	Is anything impossible [The Hebrew verb ?????? (pala') means "to be wonderful, to be extraordinary, to be surpassing, to be amazing."] for the LORD? I will return to you when the season comes round again and Sarah will have a son." <i>Sarah will have a son.</i> 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, 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.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Is anything too hard or too wonderful for the Lord [The word "Lord" as applied to God is obviously the most important word in the Bible, for it occurs oftener than any other important word--by actual count more than 5,000 times. Nothing is "too hard or too wonderful" for Him when He is truly made Lord.]? At the appointed time, when the season [for her delivery] comes around, I will return to you and Sarah shall have borne a son.
Concordant Literal Version	Is it a matter too marvelous for Yahweh Elohim? At the appointed time will I return to you according to the season of life, and Sarah has a son.
Context Group Version	Is anything too hard for YHWH? At the set time I will return to you, when the season comes around, and Sarah shall have a son.
English Standard Version	Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."
LTHB	Is anything too difficult for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, at the time of life, and <i>there will be</i> a son to Sarah.
New RSV	Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.'
Syndein	"Does 'anything'/ 'any doctrine communicated categorically' {dabar} keep on being 'too hard for'/'difficult for'/'beyond the power of' {pala' -Niphal imperfect}

Jehovah/God? At the time appointed I will return unto you, according to the norm or standard of human cycle {`eth chay - idiom: literally 'cycle of life' - meaning sexual relations, man and wife here, and then 9 months later}, and Sarah shall have a son. {Note: RBT says the greatest problem God ever faced was how to save a creature with an old sin nature and personal sins! If He has solved this problem (therefore He has given us the GREATER), will He deny us anything else (the LESSER)? See Romans Chapter 5 for more on this.}.

A Voice in the Wilderness

Is anything beyond the power of Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

World English Bible

Is anything too hard for Yahweh? At the set time I will return to you, when the season comes round, and Sarah will have a son."

Young's Updated LT

Is any thing too wonderful for Jehovah? at the appointed time I return unto you, about the time of life, and Sarah has a son." Young actually combines vv. 13 and 14 here, calling them both together, v. 14. This makes sense, as this is what God said. After this point, Young will be completely in synch with the rest of the translations.

The gist of this verse:

God asks Abraham is there anything that He cannot do. Then He tells Abraham that He will return in about 9 months and Sarah will have a son by that time.

Genesis 18:14a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .		Strong's #none BDB #209
pâlâ' (פָּלַא') [pronounced <i>paw-LAW</i>]	<i>to do that which is extraordinary [marvelous, incredible], to do that which is unusually difficult [which may or may not be a miracle], to do an extraordinary thing</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #6381 BDB #810
The Niphal also includes the following meanings, if the context does not point to a particular action: <i>to be beyond one's power, be difficult [nearly impossible] to do; to be difficult to understand; to be wonderful, be extraordinary.</i>			
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, off, away from, out from, out of, from off; on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Genesis 18:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182

Translation: Is [this] matter more extraordinary than Y^ehowah?

The word translated *too hard, too difficult* is actually a verb, the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect of pâlâ' (פָּלֵא) [pronounced paw-LAW]. Pâlâ' is in the interrogative Niphal (passive stem) and it means *is anything too difficult* and is used throughout the Old Testament primarily for acts of God. When it is not used interrogatively, then it is often translated *wondrous, marvelous, exceptional, remarkable, phenomenal, astonishing or extraordinary acts*. *Erotesis* is asking a question without waiting for an answer. This means that it is a rhetorical question; the speaker is asking an animated question for which he does not demand, nor does he wait for an answer. He is making a declaration of importance and the answer is inherent in the question. This is a particular case of an *affirmative negation*, for which one could supply, in brackets, the words *hell no!*

God needs to get Abraham (and Sarai) focused on his promises. He's just told Abraham that Sarai is laughing; Sarah doesn't know that God knows this. So, by this point, both Abraham and Sarah recognize that this is Jehovah Elohim. The verb used here is generally associated with works that God does. This is the first time that we find this word in the book of Genesis, but it occurs 5 times in the book of Job.

Let's see what we know about this word so far.

The Doctrine of Pâlâ' (פָּלֵא) [pronounced paw-LAW] [so far]

Scripture	Text/Commentary
First of all, in the Niphal pâlâ' (פָּלֵא) [pronounced paw-LAW] means, <i>to do that which is extraordinary [marvelous, incredible], to do that which is unusually difficult [which may or may not be a miracle], to do an extraordinary thing</i> . Strong's #6381 BDB #810.	
"As for me, I would seek God, and to God would I commit my cause, Who does great things and unsearchable, <u>marvelous things</u> without number." (Job 5:8–9).	Pâlâ' is a Niphal participle here, and it acts like a noun. So, early on, this word is associated with the great works of God.
"God thunders wondrously with his voice; he does great things that we cannot comprehend." (Job 37:5).	Again, we have a Niphal participle applied to God's voice, so it is functioning as an adverb here.
"Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the <u>wondrous works</u> of God." (Job 37:14).	Again, this word is found in the Niphal participle, acting as a noun, for works that God does. Some of these words are described in subsequent verses.
"Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, <u>things too wonderful</u> for me, which I did not know." (Job 42:3).	Job admits that there are things that God does which are too extraordinary for him to grasp. Again, this verb is found as a Niphal participle and it functions here as a noun.

Therefore, it ought to be quite clear that this verb in the Niphal is clearly associated with God and with what God does.

This word is also found in Job 10:16, associated with God, but in the Hithpael imperfect.

Chapter Outline

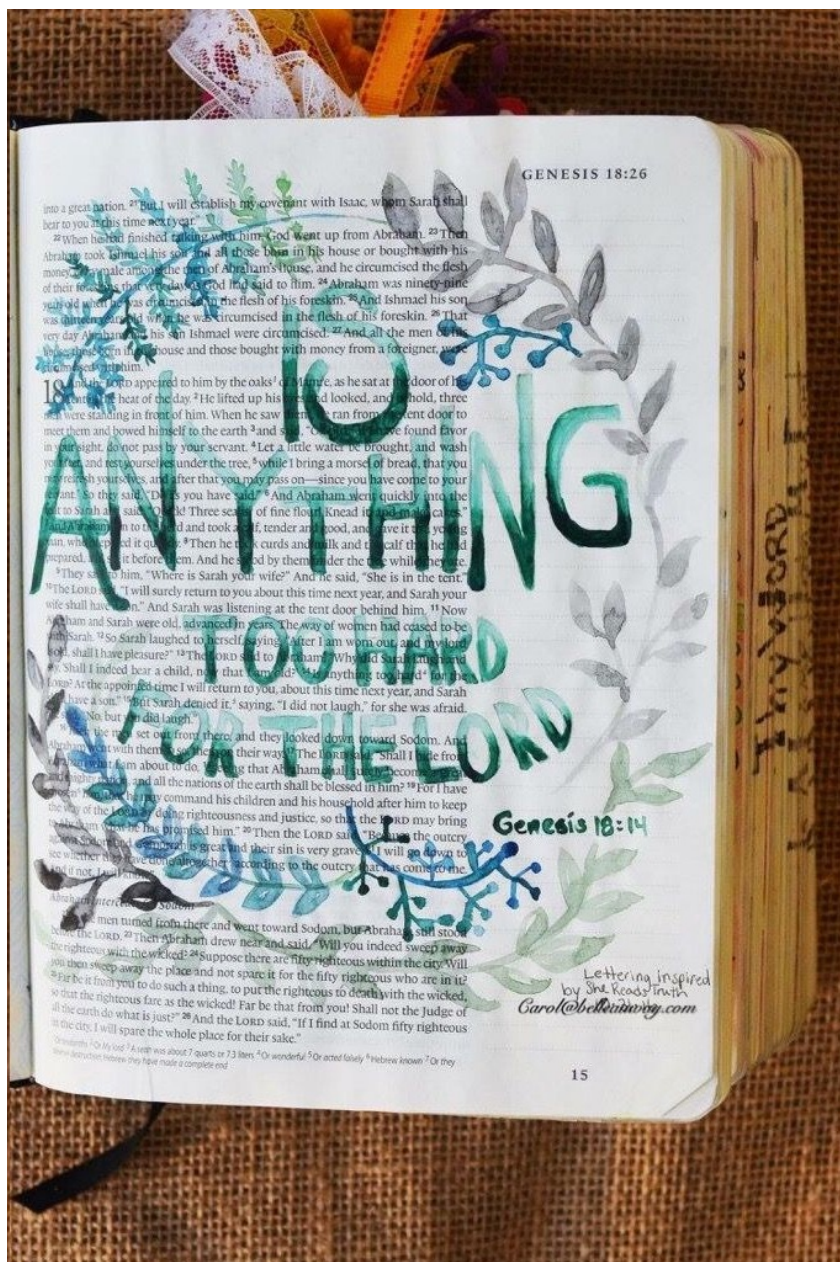
Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God would return to Abraham and Sarah in a year, at which time, they will have a son. That means, she will conceive in about 3 months.

Our Lord asks Abraham, “Is there anything too difficult for the Lord?” More literally, this reads: Is [this] matter more extraordinary than Y^ehowah? This is known as erotesis, where a question is asked, but without expecting to hear an answer for it. God is not soliciting Abraham or Sarah’s opinion on this. Jehovah is stating a fact, but states it as a question.

The answer, of course, is *no, what God is proposing here is not more extraordinary than the Lord*. Nothing is too difficult for God. This is His universe. He designed the bodies of Abraham and Sarah, and therefore, God is able to rejuvenate and reinvigorate these bodies. Something which is rarely spoken of, but implied in the first chapter of Genesis, is that God actually changed the laws of physics in the first few verses. He did not necessarily override these laws, but He possibly changed them in fundamental ways when restoring the earth.

What is far more difficult is, God providing salvation for mankind. We are born with Adam’s original sin; we have a sin nature; and if we live long enough, we commit personal sins. God is perfect righteousness and perfect justice. God cannot have any contact with sin. God is able to recognize sin, judge it, and carry out the sentence against sin. Therefore, we stand condemned before God. Yet, God is able to save us. Despite the impassable barrier between man and God, God will tear down that barrier, and yet remain faithful to His Own essence. God *cannot* simply forgive us because He feels sentimental about the creation of mankind



(that, by the way, is an example of an anthropopathism). God is God, or He is not. He must be perfect righteousness and perfect justice. Therefore, our sins cannot be ignored, overlooked or forgiven because God loves us. That would mean that God is not God.

The very God Who can forgive us our sins without violating His perfect essence is also able to regenerate the reproductive organs of Abraham and Sarah. However, God also regenerated us, an act which is far more complex. [“Is there anything too difficult for the Lord?”](#)

Genesis 18:14a—Bible Journaling (a graphic); from [pinterest](#); accessed March 22, 2018.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 18:14b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
môw'êd (מוֹעֵד) [pronounced moh- GADE]	<i>a specific (set, pre-determined, appointed) time; a point in time; a sacred season, a set feast; an appointed meeting; an appointed place [where people meet; of an assembly]; a specific sign or signal; an assembly</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4150 BDB #417
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: Regarding the specific time [for this birth], I will return to you,...

Môw'êd (מוֹעֵד) [pronounced *moh-GADE*] is a Hebrew word which means *a set time, an appointed time, a time determined beforehand*, or, by extension, *an assembly convened for a specific purpose, the place where this meeting is convened*. It is used well over 100 times in the Old Testament and a good modern translation would be *a pre-determined time, a specific time*. Often, this is a yearly event or this means a year from that day, but that is not always the case. This word is used most often when referring to feast days and solemn feast days, although it is occasionally translated *seasons*.

God has answered Sarah's questions which she has only thought. Abraham is baffled and Sarah is listening intently, realizing that this is Yahweh who is speaking. Sarah is right at the door to the tent, right near the tree where the three men are sitting and Abraham is standing, and she steps outside, perhaps making it look as though she just happened to be passing by the door and caught the tail end of this conversation.

In the previous chapter, 2 or 3 months previous, God made specific promises to Abraham as to how soon God's promises would begin to come to pass. God has returned and is telling them that this is going to take place in the very near future. Abraham needs to have a son in order for God to be able to fulfill His promises, and now has come the time that God will regenerate Abraham and Sarah, so that they are able to have children.

Right at this time, Sarah is laughing about this and Abraham is concerned that Sarah is hiding behind the tent flap and listening to everything that is being said. So their minds are distracted. God needs them to refocus on His promises.

Genesis 18:14c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'êth (עֵת) [pronounced <i>gayth</i>]	<i>time, the right time, the proper time; opportunity</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6256 BDB #773
chayyâh (חַיָּה) [pronounced <i>khay-YAWH</i>]	<i>living thing, animal, life, organisms, life form; appetite, revival, renewal; community, family, assembled group, allied families, bands</i>	substantive; feminine noun	Strong's #2416 BDB #312

Translation: ...as the time [of] renewal [i.e., *Spring*];...

God is repeating the exact same words that He said back in v. 10. My assumption is to get everyone listening (Abraham and Sarah) refocused on what is important. He does not apologize for repeating Himself. He expects both Abraham and Sarah to understand exactly what is being promised and that they can believe God and depend upon Him, that He will bring these things to pass.

Genesis 18:14d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...and Sarah will have a son [lit., to Sarah, a son].”

When God returns to Abraham and Sarah, she will have a son. By the language above, this sounds like it will occur roughly 9 months from this time. Now, quite obviously Sarah is not pregnant right at this time, otherwise she would not have laughed and thought that she and her husband might have pleasure was quite ridiculous.

In all of God's promises to Abraham, this is the first time that God puts a clear time frame on the fulfillment of the most basic promise—the birth of his son. It would come to him this Spring.

Now, you may wonder, how does Abraham know that God can keep these promises? After all, God has been making promises to Abraham for 25 years, and they seem to be getting greater and more intricate, and yet none of them have actually come to pass. How does Abraham know to trust God? In Genesis 14. Abram, with this rag-tag, minuscule army, defeated the greatest army of his day, absolutely changing human history at that point. I doubt that Abraham fully appreciated the extent of his impact of human history in this incident, but he no doubt understood that God was with him and that he defeated a huge, well-trained army. Now, if God can do that, isn't He capable of bringing to pass all that He has promised? Abraham can always go back to that experience in his life and know that God is Who God says He is.

Here is another reason that we know why Abraham trusted God. We know practically nothing about Abraham's life when he was in the Mesopotamian²⁸ area, but, my educated guess is, Abraham's life, after moving into Palestine area was dramatically changed. God had blessed him greatly. He knew that this was the right place for him to be, and it was God who told him to go there (Genesis 12:1).

Genesis 18:14 *Is [this] matter more extraordinary than Y^ehowah? Regarding the specific time [for this birth], I will return to you, as the time [of] renewal [i.e., Spring]; and Sarah will have a son [lit., to Sarah, a son].”* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:14 *Is there anything too difficult for Jehovah? Regarding this specific time, I will return to you in the Spring, and then, Sarah will have a son.”* (Kukis paraphrase)

²⁸ Properly, *Mesopotamia* stands for the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers, but it includes some of the area outside of this region.

If you have been a believer in Jesus Christ for over 5 years, and you have not noticed any remarkable changes in your life, then you simply aren't doing it right. A believer who has spent time growing spiritually in his life will notice great changes (and I mean far more changes than changing from being immoral to moral).²⁹ Don't misunderstand me—I am not saying that you will win the lottery or something (which is not necessarily a blessing), but a Christian who is growing spiritually will notice changes over a period of 5 years or so. You should be able to view yourself now, look back 5 years, and see some marked changes.

This does not mean that you ought to force yourself to act like a Christian, whatever that is; but it means that, after believing in Jesus Christ, you then embark on your spiritual life. This does not mean you simply being more moral than you were before (which yields a good result); but that you apply the mechanics of the spiritual life (naming your sins to God to be restored to fellowship) and you learn the Word of God—ideally, under the authority of a learned pastor-teacher. And so there is no confusion at this point, there are very few believers I have ever seen advance steadily apart from a local church—even those who had access to good Bible teaching and understood its importance. A priority for any believer should be to find a church where Bible doctrine is taught carefully and often.

Abraham knows, without a doubt, that God has blessed him over these years; and that it would be foolish to doubt God.

Gen 18:13–14 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

Having been listening for awhile, Sarah responds to what God told Abraham.

And so lies Sarah, to say, "I did not laugh;" for she was afraid. And so He says, "No, for you had laughed."

Genesis
18:15

And Sarah lied, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. Therefore, He said, "Wrong [lit., *no*], for you did laugh."

So Sarah lied, saying, "I did not laugh," because she was afraid to admit it. However, Y^ehowah said, "Wrong, you did laugh."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And Sarah <u>denied</u> and said, I wondered not; for she was afraid. And the <u>Angel</u> said, Fear not: yet in truth you did laugh.
Latin Vulgate	Sara <u>denied</u> , saying: I did not laugh: for she was afraid. But the Lord said: Nay; but thou didst laugh.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so lies Sarah, to say, "I did not laugh;" for she was afraid. And so He says, "No, for you had laughed."
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then Sarah <u>denied</u> , saying, I did not laugh; because she was afraid. And he said, No; but you did laugh.

²⁹ Most believers—even mature believers—from time to time, will commit acts of immorality. Some people are saved in a state of morality and remain moral throughout their lives.

Septuagint (Greek) But Sarah denied it, saying, I did not laugh, for she was afraid. And He said to her, No, but you did laugh!

Significant differences: Looking at the first verb, I don't think that *denied* is necessarily the right translation. The targum has the *Angel* speaking; but that is an interpretation, not a translation.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. Sarah was so frightened that she lied and said, "I didn't laugh." "Yes, you did!" he answered.

Easy English Sarah said that she did not laugh. She said it because she was afraid. But the *Lord said, `You are wrong. You did laugh.'

Easy-to-Read Version But Sarah said, "I didn't laugh!" (She said this because she was afraid.)

Good News Bible (TEV) Because Sarah was afraid, she denied it. "I didn't laugh," she said. "Yes, you did," he replied. "You laughed."

The Message Sarah lied. She said, "I didn't laugh," because she was afraid. But he said, "Yes you did; you laughed."

New Berkeley Version Feeling afraid, Sarah made denial, "I did not laugh." He said: no, but you did laugh.

New Century Version Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I didn't laugh." But the Lord said, "No. You did laugh."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible However, Sarah denied it, saying, 'I didn't laugh.' But she said this because she was afraid.

Ancient Roots Translinear *God's Word*TM And the Lord replied, 'Oh, but you did laugh.'
Sarah denied for she feared, saying, "I never laughed!". He said, "No, you revealed!" Because she was afraid, Sarah denied that she had laughed. But the LORD said, "Yes, you did laugh."

New Jerusalem Bible Sarah said, 'I did not laugh,' lying because she was afraid. But he replied, 'Oh yes, you did laugh.'

Revised English Bible Because she was frightened, Sarah lied and denied that she had laughed; but he said, 'Yes, you did laugh.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English Then Sarah said, I was not laughing; for she was full of fear. And he said, No, but you were laughing.

Complete Jewish Bible Sarah denied it, saying, "I didn't either laugh," because she was afraid. He said, "Not so - you did laugh."

Ferar-Fenton Bible But Sarah denied, replying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid.
He, however, answered, "Yes, you did laugh."

NET Bible[®] Then Sarah lied, saying, "I did not laugh," because she was afraid. But the LORD said, "No! You did laugh [Heb "And he said, `No, but you did laugh.'" The referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity]."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	Then dissimulating is Sarah, saying, "Not laugh did I, for she is fearful. And saying is He, "No! For laugh did you.
Context Group Version	Then Sarah denied [it], saying, I didn't laugh; for she was afraid. And he said, No; but you did laugh.
English Standard Version	But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."
exeGesese companion Bible	Then Sarah denies, saying, I laughed not; for she awes. And he says, No - but you laughed.
Heritage Bible	And Sarah denied, saying, I did not laugh, because she was afraid. And he said, No, because you did laugh.
Modern KJV	Then Sarah denied, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.
Syndein	Then Sarah kept on denying {why deny a thought?} saying, "I laughed not" - for she was afraid {that is why! She was afraid}. And He said, "Oh no, you did laugh/'Isaac'." {Note: Abraham in fellowship did not resent the rebuke of the Stranger/Lord. The principal is, God must even come before loved ones. God must be first in your life - period.}
Young's Updated LT	And Sarah denies [this], saying, "I did not laugh;" for she has been afraid; and He says, "Nay, but you did laugh."

The gist of this verse: Sarah denies laughing, but God corrects her.

Genesis 18:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kâchash (כָּחַשׁ) [pronounced kaw-KHAHSH]	<i>to lie, to deceive, to commit fraud, to defraud; to feign; to flatter; to cringe; to disappoint, to fail</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Piel imperfect:	Strong's #3584 BDB #471
Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979

Translation: And Sarah lied,...

Sarah either comes out into the open, or she speaks to them through the tent flap, and she lies.

Genesis 18:15b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
<p>There are several ways this negation is used. (1) It is an absolute <i>no</i> given to a question. (2) It can be used as an interrogative when an affirmative answer is expected. 2Kings 5:26 Job 2:10 Jer. 49:9. (3) It can be used to mean <i>without</i>. 1Chronicles 2:30 Psalm 59:4 Job 12:24 34:24. (4) It can be translated <i>not yet</i>. 2Kings 20:4 Psalm 139:16. (5) The negative is prefixed to adjective to negate them; to substantives to indicate that they are not that thing. Although some claim that this negation can stand on its own to mean <i>nothing</i>; there is no clear proof of that.³⁰</p>			
tsâchaq (צחק) [pronounced tsaw-KHAHKH]	<i>to laugh; to mock; to play</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6711 BDB #850

Translation: ...saying, "I did not laugh,"...

This is Sarah's lie; her verbal denial.

Genesis 18:15c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yârê' (אָרַי) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to be afraid; to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #3372 BDB #431

Translation: ...for she was afraid.

She is afraid because she did not laugh out loud, nobody could have told these men what happened, and yet God says that she laughed. This unnerved her somewhat.

³⁰ Taken from H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 425 (abbreviated).

Furthermore, as already discussed, God also references a private conversation that she and Abraham had a month or more ago, telling Abraham what she had said. It is obvious to Sarah that there are no ordinary visitors outside her tent flap.

Sarah is beginning to realize who the visitors are, but this is all happening rather quickly, so she does not comprehend this fully. She is at once afraid, realizing that someone can hear her thoughts, and she also denies what she did (perhaps, thinking, that she did not laugh *out loud*). Our Lord responds with a negative conjunction, often translated *no, but*. The NRSV translates this *Oh, yes, you did laugh* and the NEB renders this *yes, you did laugh*. *On the contrary* is closer to the actual Hebrew words, yet is not as stilted as *no, but*. The direct conversation indicates that Sarah is now outside, talking to the strangers, although by pre-agreement, this was not what she was supposed to do (otherwise, she would have been out there in the first place).

Genesis 18:15d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
tsâchaq (צָחַק) [pronounced <i>tsaw-KHAKH</i>]	<i>to laugh; to mock; to play</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #6711 BDB #850

Translation: Therefore, He said, “Wrong [lit., *no*], for you did laugh.”

God apparently is speaking, and He corrects her. Apparently, God is not going to let a lie stand while He speaks to them.

Because of this lie, and because Sarah did not admit to it, her fellowship with God was broken, so that we will no longer see any interchange between Sarah and God in this chapter.

Genesis 18:15 And Sarah lied, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. Therefore, He said, “Wrong [lit., *no*], for you did laugh.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:15 So Sarah lied, saying, “I did not laugh,” because she was afraid to admit it. However, Y^ehowah said, “Wrong, you did laugh.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Gen 18:15 But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

Apparently, Sarah threw open the flap and said, "I did not laugh" and God told her that she did. Sarah, no doubt, is beginning to understand who these visitors are (or, at least understand that one of them is the Lord). Her fear is based upon God knowing what she was actually thinking and having that exposed. She realized that Abraham was in fellowship with God right there outside the tent.

God has already named this child:

Because of the separation between chapters 15 and 16, we miss our Lord's sense of humor, which is evident in both the Old and New Testaments. In Genesis 15:19, Abraham and Sarah's future son was to be named Isaac. Isaac means *laughter* and Sarah was laughing within herself. Yahweh has essentially said, Sarah is laughing inside; several months from now, Sarah will still have laughter inside her. This laughter is named Isaac. Because Sarah laughed within herself, she would have nine months of having laughter inside.

Gen 17:19 And God said, Your wife Sarah truly shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. And I have established My covenant with him for a perpetual covenant with his seed after him.

Sarah laughed to herself, and you may wonder, *why make a big deal out of this?* She laughed, she is embarrassed; let it go. The verb here is the word tsâchaq (צַחֵק) [pronounced *tsaw-KHAKH*], which means *to laugh; to mock; to play*. Strong's #6711 BDB #850. Her son's name will be Isaac, which is, in the Hebrew, Yis^echâq (יִשְׁחָק) [pronounced *yihse-KHAWK*], which means *he laughs; laughing*; and is transliterated *Isaac*. Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850. These are related words. Isaac [Yis^echâq (יִשְׁחָק)] is derived from tsâchaq (צַחֵק). The idea is, Sarah now has *laughter* in her belly; and, within this month or the next, she will have *laughter* growing in her belly.

At the end of Genesis 17, we would have expected the next chapter to be about the birth of Isaac. After these 15 verses of Genesis 18, we would expect the next part of this chapter to be about the birth of Isaac. However, Isaac is not going to be born until Genesis 21.

Here is what is coming up; a **preview of coming attractions for Genesis 18–22:**

Genesis 18:16–33	Under what circumstances will God preserve a city or a nation?
Genesis 19	The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot has political influence in Sodom, but no spiritual influence (which can be contrasted with Abraham, who has spiritual influence where he is, but almost no political influence). We will see that Lot and some of his family are preserved by God. Furthermore, God is faithful in His word to Abraham.
Genesis 20	The relationship between Abraham and the nation in which he resides. Abraham lies to Abimelech. God remains faithful to Abraham, despite his deplorable behavior. Abraham's influence on this nation is spiritual.
Genesis 21	God fulfills his covenant with Abraham. Abraham makes a covenant with Abimelech, who rules over the area where Abraham lives. Again, Abraham's influence is spiritual, not political.
Genesis 22	God uses Isaac to illustrate the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for our sins.

Abraham Bargains with God Concerning the Impending Judgment of Sodom

At this point, we move to a very different portion of this chapter. Abraham has entertained 3 men, and two of them are angels and one of them is the Preincarnate Christ. During the meal, they asked about Sarah and God made promises specifically to Sarah about how she would bear a child in about a year. When Sarah heard this, she was quite skeptical because she and Abraham were long past the age of bearing children. Therefore, she laughed within herself, so that God said, “You are laughing inside; when you bear a child, you will name him *Laughter*.”

However, at this point, Y^ehowah and the two angels must be moving on. It is actually not until Genesis 19:1 where we know for certain that the other two are angels.

Abraham will stand in front of God and plead for the city of Sodom, because his nephew lives there. Now I want you to step back from this chapter, and look at it from a distance. Abraham is sleeping, and Y^ehowah and the angels nearly walk right past him. If this would have been the case, then he could not have acted as an intermediary for his nephew Lot. However, Abraham wakes up from his sleeping and then he has fellowship with God. Because of this fellowship, Abraham is able to stand before God and intercede for Lot. The parallel is quite simple. If we are asleep—out of fellowship—then all that goes on in the world which is spiritual passes us by. We do not have any input. However, if we are in fellowship with God, then we have standing with Him and we can plead whatever cause is important to us (which God wants us to do).

The next 4 verses will be packed with information:

Genesis 18:16–19 And the men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham was going with them to bring them on the way. And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, And Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the persons of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his sons and his house after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him. (MKJV).

It may not seem like it, but there is a lot buried in these verses; particularly in v. 19.

And so arise from there mortals and so they look out toward faces of Sodom. And Abraham is walking with them to send them off.

Genesis
18:16

So the men arose from there and they looked out against the face of Sodom, as Abraham was walking with them to send them off.

So the men arose from there and they were looking towards Sodom, as Abraham was walking with them to see them off.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

And the angels, who had the likeness of men, arose from thence, and the one who had made known the tidings to Sarah ascended to the high heavens; and two of them looked toward Sedom; and Abraham went with them. [JERUSALEM. And they looked towards.]

Latin Vulgate

And when the men rose up from thence, they turned their eyes towards Sodom: and Abraham walked with them, bringing them on the way.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so arise from there mortals and so they look out toward faces of Sodom. And Abraham is walking with them to send them off.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the men rose up from there and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to see them off.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the men, having risen up from there, looked towards Sodom <u>and Gomorrah</u> . And Abraham went with them, attending to them on their journey.
Significant differences:	The targum has additional words, as usual. The Greek adds <i>and Gomorrah</i> .

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	When the three men got ready to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked part of the way with them.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then the men got up to leave. They looked toward Sodom {and began walking in that direction}. Abraham walked with them to send them on their way.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then the men left and went to a place where they could look down at Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on their way.
<i>The Message</i>	When the men got up to leave, they set off for Sodom. Abraham walked with them to say good-bye.
New Berkeley Version	The men got up from there, looking toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to direct their way.
New Century Version	Then the men got up to leave and started out toward Sodom. Abraham walked along with them a short time to send them on their way.
New Living Translation	Then the men got up from their meal and looked out toward Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on their way.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then the men got up and headed toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham traveled along with them to assist in their journey.
Ancient Roots Translinear	The men rose from there and overlooked toward the front of Sodom. Abraham went with them to send them.
Beck's American Translation	Abraham Prays for Sodom The men started to leave. They looked down at Sodom as Abraham was walking with them to see them off.
<i>God's Word™</i>	Then the men got up to leave. As Abraham was walking with them to see them off, they looked toward Sodom.
New American Bible	<i>Abraham Intercedes for Sodom.</i> With Abraham walking with them to see them on their way, the men set out from there and looked down toward Sodom.
NIRV	Abraham Makes an Appeal for Sodom The men got up to leave. They looked down toward Sodom. Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way.
New Jerusalem Bible	From there the men set out and arrived within sight of Sodom, with Abraham accompanying them to speed them on their way.
New Simplified Bible	Then the men stood up from their meal and started in the direction of Sodom. Abraham went with them to send them on the way.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And the men went on from there in the direction of Sodom; and Abraham went with them on their way.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	The men then departed from there, and faced towards Sodom, and Abraham walked with them to converse.
HCSB	The men got up from there and looked out over Sodom, and Abraham was walking with them to see them off.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And the men arose from there, and they looked upon Sodom, and Abraham went with them to escort them,...
NET Bible®	Abraham Pleads for Sodom When the men got up to leave [Heb "And the men arose from there."], they looked out over [Heb "toward the face of."] Sodom. (Now [The disjunctive parenthetical clause sets the stage for the following speech] Abraham was walking with them to see them on their way [The Piel of ?????? (shalakh) means "to lead out, to send out, to expel"; here it is used in the friendly sense of seeing the visitors on their way.])
NIV – UK	Abraham Pleads for Sodom When the men got up to leave, they looked down towards Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenton	And the men having risen up from thence looked towards Sodom and Gomorrha. And Abraam went with them, attending them on their journey.
Concordant Literal Version	And rising are the mortals thence, and they are gazing on the face of Sodom and Gomorrah. And Abraham is going with them to send them away.
Darby Translation	And the men rose up thence, and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to conduct them.
English Standard Version	Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.
Heritage Bible	And the men rose up from there, and gazed upon the face of Sodom; and Abraham walked with them to bring them on the way.
NASB	Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off.
New RSV	Then the men set out from there, and they looked towards Sodom; and Abraham went with them to set them on their way.
Webster's Bible Translation	And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.
Young's Updated LT	And the men rise from there, and look on the face of Sodom, and Abraham is going with them to send them away.

The gist of this verse: The men begin to walk toward Sodom and Abraham walks along with them to see them off.

Genesis 18:16a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced koom]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
'ânâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-seem]	<i>mortals, mortal men, mankind; fallen men, depraved men, feeble men [liable to disease and calamity]; peons, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

When this word is used for man, the emphasis is either a reference to man in his fallen state (the emphasis does not have to be upon sin; it can be upon man's fragility and mortal nature) or upon the lower classes of man, *the peons, peasants, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble*.

Translation: [So the men arose from there...](#)

There came a time when our Lord and these 2 angels had to leave. Many people wish that they could have sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to Him speak; and, better yet, have enjoyed a dinner with Him. This is exactly what is happening with Abraham. He is enjoying a meal with the God of the Universe, that God that created everything.

I have been struggling with the use of this word to describe Y^{ehowah} Elohim and 2 angels, but the idea here is, they are clearly in the forms of men. There is nothing to distinguish them from men.

We all have personalities and some personalities appeal to us more than others. There is no reason to think that angels lack personality or individuality. So Abraham was with the Creator of the Universe and with 2 angels who observed God restore the earth. This is something that few men could enjoy in our mortal bodies.

When James was explaining the place of works in our spiritual lives, he wrote: **And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God."** (James 2:23; Genesis 15:6 2Chronicles 20:7). Abraham had no enjoyed this kind of fellowship with God before. There is this fantasy with some intellectuals as with whom would they like to have a dinner party. No matter what men you choose—Albert Einstein, Adolf Hitler, Julius Cæsar, Thomas Jefferson—no such fantasy dinner would

have been quite like this. Abraham was able to share a meal with and conversation with our Lord in His preincarnate form and two angels. That is a real fantasy dining experience.

Genesis 18:16b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâqaph (שָׁקַף) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAHF</i>]	<i>to look out [forth, down] [from a window], to look down upon</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #8259 BDB #1054
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah]</i>	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
pânîym (פְּנֵיַם) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, ‘al and pânîym mean <i>upon his face of, against the face of; facing him, in front of him, before (as in preference to) him, in addition to him, overlooking him.</i>			
Sedum (שְׂדֹמ) [pronounced <i>sehd-OHM</i>]	<i>burning; which is transliterated Sodom</i>	masculine singular locative noun	Strong's #5467 BDB #690

Translation: ...and they looked out against the face of Sodom,...

Although I would have expected them to look out *toward* Sodom, what is being conveyed here is, these *men* are looking toward Sodom as a place that must be destroyed. The people of Sodom have become so degenerate that they must be destroyed.

Our principle knowledge of Sodom is from the Bible. Based upon the great war of Genesis 14, I place Sodom south of the Dead Sea or west of the southern tip of the Dead Sea. The name, *Sodom*, means *burning*; and this suggests that God gave it a name—perhaps a play on words for the actual name of this city. Just as we will forever remember Abram as *Abraham*, we will also remember this ancient city as *Sodom*. It is very likely that it had a different name, and that this is a play on its actual name.

Because of the sin of man—and I realize that this will be one of most politically incorrect things for a person to say—some populations must be purged from this earth—every man, woman and child—and such a theme continues throughout the Old Testament. The idea is, a set of people (a nation, city or just general geographical area) become so degenerate that they threaten to infect the entire human race. We are first introduced to this principle with the Great Flood of Noah, where God destroys every person on the earth, apart from Noah and his family, because they have become corrupted by fallen angels. This is both representative of being a picture of the corruption of the sin nature as well as an actual historical event. The world had come to the point where all mankind was in danger of being corrupted, and there would be no Savior and no one to save.

Sometimes this corruption is moral (as occurred in New Orleans) and sometimes this corruption is religious, as in many Arab countries in the Middle east. I have spoken of both Iraq and Afghanistan, and how our involvement with these countries will be nothing like our involvement with Germany, Japan and South Korea. We brought (or brought back) the gospel of Jesus Christ to those countries and, as a result, there has been enough of a pivot of believers and mature believers within those countries to make them great. However, our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan were discouraged, by military policy, from sharing their faith in Jesus Christ. There was no push to require freedom of religion in either of those countries, and, as a result, our excursion into these countries, as well-meaning as it was, is doomed to failure. Democracy does not save a nation; the gospel of Jesus Christ saves a nation. The President who got us into these wars took a great many things into consideration (including the location of these countries with respect to Iran); but he did not take the gospel of Jesus Christ into consideration. When the military began instituting clear anti-evangelical policies, that same president never stepped up to say, "That is the key to our successful turning around of Germany, Japan and South Korea."

At the time that I write this (2011)³¹, the so-called *Arab Spring* has become this great phenomenon of the people rising up against their dictators, and many people—particularly liberals—proclaimed this as a great uprising of freedom. However, at the time that I write, radical Islam controls the newly elected governing body in Egypt (if memory serves, the Muslim Brotherhood has 54% of their parliament seats, and they are not the only radical group there). So, we have seen Christians persecuted, their churches and houses set on fire, and dozens if not hundreds killed. Islam is evil—no matter how many nice Muslims you know (I know many nice ones too)—and as they increase in proportion to the rest of the population, they also begin to destroy all that they disagree with. They are like a cancer in whatever society that they exist. When they are small, they are like a benign growth of cells, which may suddenly grow, produce a lump, but this is not a growth that will take over and destroy your body. However, once this population reaches, say, 10%, then things begin to change. They become much more aggressive within the society in which they live, holding demonstrations and making religious demands and taking legal action. Once they become, say, 50% of the population, they look to destroy those with whom they do not agree. Again, they function just like a cancer which has invaded your body and is invading many of your organs in your body, taking it over. The only solution is for the cancer to be completely and totally removed.

Now, lest you think I have gone over the deep end, I am not saying that we need to round up all of the Muslims in the United States and execute them or put them in camps. As long as their population is kept low and their activities are kept in check, religious freedom is the way to go. However, there will come a time in our future—my guess is within the next 10 or 20 years—where there will be great wars break out in the Middle East, and the solution is going to be a massive destruction of the people of this or that country. Large populations of Muslims cannot live peacefully—it is impossible. It is like everyone in a city giving their sin natures complete freedom and expecting that the result is going to be good and moral. It won't.

We do not live in a theocracy, nor should we. God is not coming down to the United States and telling certain individuals to destroy this or that population group. We need leaders who understand the Word of God and the plan of God so that they can make good decisions, based upon Bible doctrine or, at the very least, the **laws of divine establishment**. That way, when faced with a great crisis, that they will understand what to do.

Application: When it comes to our leaders, we do not look, necessarily, for the person who speaks of Jesus Christ the most and proclaims Christianity the loudest. Although that ought to be a factor, we need to take many things into consideration—how close this person aligns with the laws of divine establishment, if this person is an actual leader, if this person actually has executive experience.

³¹ Sometimes the writing for a particular chapter might take place over a period of a decade.

A very good example would be, comparing former President Jimmy Carter to current presidential candidate Mitt Romney (I write this in 2012 before the 2012 election has taken place). Let's pretend that these two men, [a young] Carter and Romney, are running against one another for the presidency. Many Christians would be confused by such a choice. Jimmy Carter is clearly born again; he clearly believes in Jesus Christ. However, Mitt Romney lines up with the laws of divine establishment in his thinking much more than Carter does. Although Romney may be a believer in Jesus Christ (like Catholics, some Mormons are saved and some depend upon their works and therefore are not) and he may or may not be saved, what is key is that his thinking lines up with the laws of divine establishment (which is true of most Mormons). I use these men by way of example for 2 reasons: (1) they are not running against one another and (2) Romney is not my first choice in the primary.³² I use them because they illustrate a point—an unbeliever whose thinking most closely lines up with the laws of divine establishment is far better than a Christian who has not a clue as to what he believes, apart from exercising faith in Jesus Christ.

So, regardless of the leader we elect, God is not going to whisper in his ear, "Destroy the country of ____." World events will help the president determine what his policy will be and how our military ought to be applied. However, so there is no confusion on this point, God has used our military in the past and He will use it in the future, even when under the control of a confused president (which describes most of our presidents). It is best to have a president, in these circumstances, who lines up with the laws of divine establishment.

Already, Sodom has been important in the life of Abraham. When he and Lot had so many possessions that they could not keep them separate, they decided to split up. The Abraham and Lot Conglomerate became Abraham Inc and Lot's Domestic. Abraham allowed Lot to choose the direction he would go in, and Lot went south toward Sodom and Gomorrah.

Sometime later, it had come to Abraham's attention that the people of this southern region rebelled against the Assyrians, causing the Assyrians to come and administer the **5th Stage of National Discipline** to Sodom. They had already been under the **4th Stage of National Discipline**, where they were ruled over by a foreign power; but, in the 5th Stage, this foreign power descended upon them and took them all as prisoner-slaves.

Abraham, with a very small army caught the Assyrian army by surprise and actually put them on the run, freeing their prisoners. This was a victory which changed human history for hundreds of years.

However, there was a reason why Sodom and that general area was under foreign control and later facing the 5th Stage of National Discipline, which was not revealed back in Genesis 14. However, this will come to light in the next chapter.

Genesis 18:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾAb ^e râhâm (אֲבִרָאָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

³² I wrote most of this before Romney became the presumptive nominee.

Genesis 18:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>is walking, is going, is departing, is advancing, is traveling</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
ʿim (עם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: ...as Abraham was walking with them...

You ought to notice that Abraham does not want this conversation to end. Unlike previous meets with God, God would come, spend a short time with Abraham, and then disappear. However, God has spent several hours with Abraham, and he is here walking with God, in order to take in as much as he possibly can.

Genesis 18:16d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	Piel infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

Translation: ...to send them off.

The verb here can be used in a positive, negative or neutral way. Here, Abraham is giving these men a sending off, where he is walking with them, greatly enjoying their company. No doubt you have had dinner guests or you have gone to dinner with a special person, and you are about to say goodnight, and you spend an additional 20 minutes at the door saying goodbye, but there are so many things to say, that you continue talking. That is what is happening here.

It has become clear to Abraham and to Sarah that one of these men is the Lord. Vv. 13 and 14 indicate when this fact began to dawn upon Abraham and Sarah.

What is about to follow is a primer on intercessory prayer. Abraham has recently (13 or so years ago) for all intents and purposes, rescued the five cities, which included Sodom. His nephew Lot, and his family, was living in Sodom. God had a plan for Sodom and that was destruction. When a society reaches a certain peak of degeneracy (which we are quite a degenerate nation today, but nothing like Sodom), God must destroy it. Such degeneracy is like a cancer and will destroy the entire world with its degeneracy unless it is destroyed. This passage will also teach the importance of a *pivot*, as Thieme liked to call it. When a nation has individuals in it

who are believers, these believers act as a preservative and a stabilizer to that society. When they are mature believers, that increases their function in these regards.

In these five cities, there are perhaps anywhere from 10,000 to a half a million people (I am making an educated guess). Lot has a wife, at least two daughters which are virgins, at least two sons-in-law, at least two sons and probably a few servants. Abraham knows that out of the persons in Lot's household at least ten of these are all believers. This should give one an understanding for how small a pivot needs to be in order to preserve a nation (in this case, a city). Even if 1/10 of 1% of a population are believers, God will often preserve that nation, given intercessory prayer on the part of mature believers.

Genesis 18:16 *So the men arose from there and they looked out against the face of Sodom, as Abraham was walking with them to send them off.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:16 *So the men arose from there and they were looking towards Sodom, as Abraham was walking with them to see them off.* (Kukis paraphrase)

Gen 18:16 *Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.*

Man was created to resolve the angelic conflict. These 2 angels with our Lord represent the billions of angels which God created, which angels are looking on, watching us, and learning God's character through what God does with us. Why?

God has already explained to the angels Who He is. He has already held Bible doctrine courses and explained His essence to them, and how He created them, and how they are His creatures to do His bidding. God has told them that He is perfect righteousness, perfect justice; that He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent; and that He is both truth and love and that His life is eternal. However, simply telling the angels was not good enough.

My father could have explained to me who he was and how he thought and what his values were. However, I can recall specific instances from being a child, and the things which my father did and said, and these had a powerful impact upon me (as do the actions or inactions of any father). I recall my father's character by how he interacted with us kids and with our mom. Much of what I know about marriage and family is a result of 25 years of observing him. Now, had he just told me what was right and wrong, it would not have been enough; he demonstrated day after day who he was and what his relationship to his family was; and that is what I remember.

Angels observe God interacting with mankind in all sorts of different circumstances, and several different **dispensations**, and Who and What God is becomes very clear to them, based upon these millions of interactions. God explains Who He is in His Word. No doubt, God has told the angels Who He is and what it is all about. However, a third of the angels fell, who did not believe God. So, now God shows to all angels, both fallen and elect, Who He is by the way He interacts with us.

At this point in time in the Bible, we know very little about who or what angels are. We were exposed to Satan in Genesis 3, and here and the next chapter to 2 elect angels. What I have said about **angels** in general and Satan in specific has been culled from the rest of the Bible.

There is some point in time in our lives where we thought, "Who are we, where did we come from and where is this place?" God's been here eternally; but we have a point in time where we begin to wonder what our lives are all about. Angels would have been created, and there they are; and they ask, "Who are we, where did we come

from and where is this place?” And God told them and God demonstrated His relationship to them; and yet some of them chose disobedience to Him (just as Adam and the woman chose to be disobedient to God).

Angels now observe us, and how God deals with us. And these dealings bring out God’s perfect character. And no matter what we do, God has to maintain His perfect character. If He interacts just one time outside of His essence, then He is not God and millions of angels will witness this.

We go to movies all the time, and, in an engrossing movie, we are drawn up into the movie and we learn about the characters and who they are, their strengths and weaknesses, and how they act in this or that circumstance. Angels are, for all intents and purposes, watching the greatest movie ever produced. Our lives on this earth is the greatest big budget movie currently in development, with a cast of billions and a running time of thousands and maybe millions of years (we do not know how much time elapsed between the ice age of the earth and its thawing out). Angels find out, throughout this big budget, heavenly production, exactly Who God is and exactly how His character interacts with His rebellious creatures. Angels understand who God is by observing what He does.

Gen 18:16 Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.

And so Y^ehowah said, “Will concealing I from Abraham that I am doing?” Genesis 18:17 **Then Y^ehowah said, “Should I keep concealing from Abraham that [which] I am doing?”**

Then Jehovah said, “Should I continue to conceal from Abraham that which I am about to do?”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the Lord said, with His Word, I cannot hide from Abraham that which I am about to do;...
Latin Vulgate	And the Lord said: Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so Y ^e howah said, “Will concealing I from Abraham that I am doing?”
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD said, Shall I hide from my servant Abraham the thing which I am going to do,...
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham My servant what things I intend to do?
Significant differences:	None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	The LORD said to himself, "I should tell Abraham what I am going to do,...
Easy English	But the *Lord thought, `I will tell Abraham what I will do. I will not hide it from him.
Easy-to-Read Version	The Lord said to himself, “Should I tell Abraham the thing that I will now do?”
Good News Bible (TEV)	And the LORD said to himself, "I will not hide from Abraham what I am going to do.
New Berkeley Version	Then the LORD said, Am I hiding from Abraham what I am about to do,...
New Century Version	Abraham's Bargain with God The Lord said, "Should I tell Abraham what I am going to do now?"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	Yahweh said, "I will cover Abraham from whatever I do.
Christian Community Bible	And Yahweh said, "Can I conceal from Abraham what I am about to do?
God's Word™	The LORD said, "I shouldn't hide what I am going to do from Abraham.
New American Bible	The LORD considered: Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,...
New Jerusalem Bible	Now Yahweh had wondered, 'Shall I conceal from Abraham what I am going to do,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And the Lord said, Am I to keep back from Abraham the knowledge of what I do;...
New Advent Bible	And the Lord said: Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do...
NET Bible®	Then the LORD said, "Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do [The active participle here refers to an action that is imminent.]?"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham [My friend and servant] what I am going to do,...
Concordant Literal Version	And Yahweh says, "Shall I cover from Abraham, My servant, what I am doing,...
Context Group Version	And YHWH said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do;...
English Revised Version	The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,...
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yah Veh says, Hide I what I work from Abraham?.
Green's Literal Translation	And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I am doing?
Heritage Bible	And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I do,.
Syndein	And Jehovah/God said {'amar}, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I am about to do/manufacture {'asah - out of divine justice and righteousness}."
World English Bible	Yahweh said, "Will I hide from Abraham what I do,...
Young's Updated LT	And Jehovah said, `Am I concealing from Abraham that which I am doing?

The gist of this verse: God asks if He is hiding from Abraham what He plans to do, implying that Abraham should know.

Genesis 18:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; pausal form	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Translation: Then Y^ehowah said,...

What one would expect here is the wâw consecutive followed by the imperfect verb, indicating that, next is what God says. However, this is not actually next, as, the previous verse scene continues. That is, Abraham is still with them, walking and seeing them off.

Although some translations have God thinking to Himself, most translations understand here that God is speaking to these angels. Although we are exposed only briefly to angels here and there, it appears as though God has a teaching ministry to the elect and fallen angels, and that they are continually learning the concept of free will and man's relationship to God.

God is about to bring judgment upon Sodom, and, essentially, what He will ask these angels is, "It is obvious that we are going to Sodom to destroy it; should I tell Abraham about this and should he be allowed input?" Part of the Angelic Conflict involves educating the angels.

Genesis 18:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .		Strong's #none BDB #209
kâçâh (כִּסֶּה) [pronounced <i>kaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to cover, to clothe, to conceal; to spread over, to engulf; to overwhelm</i>	Piel participle	Strong's #3680 BDB #491
'ânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>aw-NEE</i>]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרָאָה) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation:...“Should I keep concealing from Abraham...

Two participles are used in this verse, which communicate both continuous and ongoing action. God came to Abraham for two reasons: (1) to announce again that he will sire a child by Sarah and (2) that God is there to destroy Sodom. The latter reason God has continued to conceal from Abraham. He never spoke of it at dinner; and He has not mentioned it during this walk toward Sodom. However, now, as the Preincarnate Christ and the two angels walk down the road, with Abraham being there, God asks them this question.

Genesis 18:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'ânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced aw-NEE]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
'āsâh (עֹשֶׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>doing, making, constructing, fashioning, forming, preparing</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation: ...that [which] I am doing?

God does not talk to Himself. He is speaking to the other members of the trinity or to the angels, and He is speaking aloud because the angels cannot read God's mind. God must narrate some of the events of history so that it is clear to the angels just exactly what is occurring and what God's involvement is in the world. Much of the reason for human history is the solving of the angelic conflict; the resolving of the issues raised at the appeal trial of Satan. Since God is love and God is perfect justice, it is not a contradiction, but in some sort of way, it would be difficult for Him to condemn Satan and the fallen angels. It is even more difficult for the elect angels to understand; human history explains that, so much of what is seen by the angels is explained to them point by point. When God asks if He should conceal what He is about to do from Abraham, this is again an example of an affirmative negation in erotesis. He is not eliciting information but stating a question which demands a strong negative answer.

The judgment of Sodom is ongoing. When a city or a nation is under judgment, it may seem as if it happens all at once, but it is clearly judged and there are clear indications that it is being judged.

San Francisco is a great example. Whereas, there are many wonderful people who live there, there is also the infiltration of great degeneracy, the homosexual political movement. Their attack upon the city is obvious; they have a homosexual pride parade which is not for family viewing. Whereas, you may haul your child out for this or that parade, you would not bring him out for this parade. This is because this parade is filled with men wearing odd costumes and feigning sexual intercourse (and other homosexual acts) with one another. In the general bay area, schools have been invaded by homosexual activists who bring in anti-bullying programs into the schools there, which is a thinly veiled attempt to introduce the concept of homosexual relationships to children who are in grammar school and who, at their young age, give little or no thought to sexual relationships. In fact, the idea here is, to introduce at a very early age that two men living together is equivalent to a man and a woman who are married. San Francisco was once one of the most vibrant and interesting cities in the world; talking to a stranger on the bus could connect you with someone who had come to this land 50 years ago from China, Germany, Poland, or wherever; a person who has a heavy accent and who loves the United States. Now it has become a city of strong liberal leanings, where political correctness is the order of the day, where the city both spends a huge amount of money on various liberal causes and enforces liberal group-think. As a result, tourism has shrunk and is often confined to specific areas of the city, where there is not this constant political assault. This city has faced wide dramatic swings in real estate prices; problems with tourists drop-off (as S.F. was once one of the greatest tourist destinations in the world), and a government which is bleeding its businesses dry in order to spend their money on city services and liberal theology. So far, there has been no great crisis in San Francisco, apart from AIDS and the earthquake that took out the Oakland Bay Bridge; but long-term inhabitants there have observed

that the city they once moved to and loved has changed dramatically over the past 30–60 years, and certainly not for the better.

Genesis 18:17 Then Y^ehowah said, “Should I keep concealing from Abraham that [which] I am doing? Then Jehovah said, “Should I continue to conceal from Abraham that which I am about to do? (Kukis mostly literal)

Genesis 18:17 Then Jehovah said, “Should I continue to conceal from Abraham that which I am about to do? (Kukis paraphrase)

Then Y^ehowah said, “Should I keep concealing from Abraham that [which] I am doing? The Bible does not fully explain what is going on. God is obviously speaking to the two angels—and to the millions of angels who are observing this scene; but can Abraham hear him? It does not appear that Abraham hears this. However, by v. 20, Abraham will hear what God is doing. Also, let me add, it does not appear that the angels answer God (although, this is probably not all that is said during this walk).

So, now God speaks to the angels who are with Him. Although it doesn’t say, it is even possible that he is communicating with them by thinking, so this conversation takes place outside of the realm of Abraham’s hearing.

However, since we have this conversation recorded here, it is reasonable that God spoke aloud to these angels, so that Abraham could hear Him. This presumes that the angels will answer, understanding the implications.

God begins to explain just exactly why Abraham is important.

And Abraham, being, is to a people large and powerful and have blessed themselves in him all nations of the earth.

Genesis
18:18

Furthermore, Abraham will definitely be a great and powerful people and all nations of the earth are blessed in [possibly, *by*] him.

Furthermore, Abraham will definitely be a great and powerful nation; and all of the nations of the earth will be blessed by him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

For Abraham is to be a great and mighty people, and through him shall all the peoples of the earth be blessed. [JERUSALEM. And the Lord with His Word said, Shall I hide from Abraham, My friend, that which I am about to do? Forasmuch as the town of Sedom is among the gifts that I have given to him, it is just that I should not overthrow it, till I have made it known to him.]

Latin Vulgate

Seeing he shall become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth shall be blessed?

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And Abraham, being, is to a people large and powerful and have blessed themselves in him all nations of the earth.

Peshitta (Syriac)

Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed through him?

Septuagint (Greek)

But Abraham shall become a great and populous nation, and in him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

Significant differences: Quite obviously, I had trouble coming up with a strictly literal translation which makes sense. All of the translations still seem to be fairly close in meaning.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham will certainly become a great populous nation, and all the earth's nations will be blessed because of him.
Contemporary English V.	...since his family will become a great and powerful nation that will be a blessing to all other nations on earth.
Good News Bible (TEV)	His descendants will become a great and mighty nation, and through him I will bless all the nations.
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham is going to become a large and strong nation; all the nations of the world are going to find themselves blessed through him.
New Life Bible	...since Abraham will become a great and powerful nation, because good will come to all the nations of the earth through him?

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	For, AbraHam will become a great and highly populated nation, and all the nations of the earth be blest through him.
Ancient Roots Translinear Christian Community Bible	Abraham will be a great big nation, and all the nations of the land will bless him. Abraham, in fact, is going to become a great and powerful nation and through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed, 19 for I have chosen him to command...
<i>God's Word™</i>	After all, Abraham is going to become a great and mighty nation and through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed.
New American Bible	...now that he is to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth are to find blessing in him? Luke 1:55
NIRV	He will certainly become a great and powerful nation. All nations on earth will be blessed because of him.
Revised English Bible	He will become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will wish to be blessed as he is blessed.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Seeing that Abraham will certainly become a great and strong nation, and his name will be used by all the nations of the earth as a blessing?
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	...since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation and all the nations of the earth are to bless themselves by hi?
NET Bible®	After all, Abraham [Heb "And Abraham." The disjunctive clause is probably causal, giving a reason why God should not hide his intentions from Abraham. One could translate, "Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation?"] will surely become [The infinitive absolute lends emphasis to the finite verb that follows.] a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on the earth will pronounce blessings on one another [Theoretically the Niphal can be translated either as passive or reflexive/reciprocal. (The Niphal of "bless" is only used in formulations of the Abrahamic covenant. See Gen 12:2; 18:18; 28:14.) Traditionally the verb is taken as passive here, as if Abram were going to be a channel or source of blessing. But in later formulations of the Abrahamic covenant (see Gen 22:18; 26:4) the Hitpael replaces this Niphal form,

suggesting a translation "will bless [i.e., "pronounce blessings upon"] themselves [or "one another]." The Hitpael of "bless" is used with a reflexive/reciprocal sense in Deut 29:18; Ps 72:17; Isa 65:16; Jer 4:2. Gen 18:18 (like 12:2) predicts that Abraham will be held up as a paradigm of divine blessing and that people will use his name in their blessing formulae. For examples of blessing formulae utilizing an individual as an example of blessing see Gen 48:20 and Ruth 4:11] [using his name](#).

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	...when Abraham shall become, yea become a nation, great and staunch, and blessed in him are all the nations of the earth?.
Context Group Version	...seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the land { or earth } shall be esteemed in him?
Darby Translation	Since Abraham shall indeed become a great and mighty nation; and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.
English Standard Version	...seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?.
exeGeser companion Bible	...seeing that in becoming, Abraham becomes a great and mighty goyim, with all the goyim of the earth being blessed in him?
Heritage Bible	And Abraham becoming, shall become a great and mighty people, and all peoples of the earth shall be blessed in him?
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham certainly becomes a nation great and mighty, and blessed in him have been all nations of the earth?

The gist of this verse: God asks if it is right for Him to conceal from Abraham what He is about to do, seeing that Abraham will become a great nation by which all nations will be blessed.

Genesis 18:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾAb ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

Genesis 18:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
<p>The infinitive absolute has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add <i>ing</i> to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form.³³</p>			
<p>A Qal infinitive absolute is a verb which can act like noun, a verb or an adverb. Generally it takes the place of a noun and serves to intensify meanings. When used as a complement of affirmation, it may be rendered <i>surely, indeed, definitely</i>; and when it is a complement of improbability and condition, we render it <i>at all, freely, indeed</i>. The Qal infinitive absolute can also serve as an adverbial complement; or, as a verb, it can replace finite verbs, imperatives, participles, and the infinitive constructs.³⁴</p>			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
gôwy (גוי) [pronounced GOH-ee]	<i>people, nation</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1471 BDB #156
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced gaw-DOHL]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿâtsûwm (אַצִּיּוּם) [pronounced ʿaw-ZOOM]	<i>powerful, strong, robust, mighty; numerous, great</i>	masculine singular adjective:	Strong's #6099 BDB #783

Translation: Furthermore, Abraham will definitely be a great and powerful people...

Abraham will be made into one of the greatest nations in human history. Of the ancient nations, it is one of the most well-known; and the people of Israel will, on several occasions, defeat much larger and much greater armies. We, in fact, got a taste of this back in Genesis 14.

³³ *Biblical Hebrew*; Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

³⁴ Taken from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 2277.

The repetition of the verb indicates that this will unquestionably happen. Bear in mind, that God is speaking to angels, who also exist in time. Therefore, what will happen is future from them at that point in time. God knows exactly what will occur in the future; but angels do not. They are learning in time, as events unfold.

Again, picture human history is being a gigantic movie, which angels are observing. Unlike most of the movies which we see, this movie has a purpose; it has meaning and truth. Angels are learning about God as this movie continues. Essentially, God is giving them previews of coming attractions.

Genesis 18:18b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ, וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bârak ^e (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK^e</i>]	<i>to bless oneself</i>	3 rd person plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
gôwyîm (גוֹיִם) [pronounced <i>goh-YIHM</i>]	<i>Gentiles, [Gentile] nations, people, peoples, nations</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1471 BDB #156
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: ...and all nations of the earth are blessed in [possibly, by] him.

The perfect tense, which generally represents an accomplished state or a past event is used here to emphasize that this stands as a true statement, even though, for the angels and Abraham, it had not occurred yet.

Notice how God reasons here. God is about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. In this area are Lot, his wife and their 2 daughters. Recall also that Lot would have originally taken with him a number of herdsmen who either worked for him or were his slaves. We have no idea what has happened to them. We will find out that all of Lot's possessions—which, at one time, were so extensive, they could not be kept separate from Abraham's—seem to have disappeared.

Genesis 18:18 Furthermore, Abraham will definitely be a great and powerful people and all nations of the earth are blessed in [possibly, by] him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:18 Furthermore, Abraham will definitely be a great and powerful nation; and all of the nations of the earth will be blessed by him. (Kukis paraphrase)

Abraham is known as the father of the Jews whereas Moses will be known as the father of the nation Israel. Hundreds of years from that point, there will be 2 million people who are descended from Abraham, and they will be in slavery; and God will bring them out of bondage to Egypt and bring them into the Land of Promise. God will make a nation of these people, a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be bless in him. Actually, it would be legitimate to translate this verse:

Gen 18:17–18 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in it [that is, by means of the nation Israel]?"

I am not aware of any translation which translates this verse in this way—that is, every translation says that **all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him**—and there is a reason for this. Here is where some knowledge of Hebrew is helpful. *Him* is a 3rd person masculine singular suffix, which often will refer back to the nearest previous masculine singular noun, which, in this case, is *nation*. However, in the verse which follows, we have five 3rd person masculine singular suffixes, all which definitely refer back to Abraham; therefore, the one in v. 18 should refer to Abraham as well. Therefore, the proper translation would be:

Gen 18:17–18 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

This is what is known as blessing by association, something which we have previously **studied**. Quite obviously, Abraham is no longer around; there is no way we can ring him up on the phone and meet with him for lunch, in order to receive blessing by association with him. However, his descendants are with us. We are blessed in several ways: (1) first and foremost, our relationship with Jesus Christ, Who is our Savior and our only way to God (John 14:6); and Who is descended from Abraham. (2) We are blessed by the nation Israel, because this is a corporate group of Jews. (3) Finally, we are blessed because of our association with Jews in the United States, where their lives and freedoms are protected.

God is telling these angels how consequential this man Abraham is to the state of the world. Right now, he is simply a fairly wealthy man who is moving about in the land of Canaan, without having any particular ownership of any plot of land. However, God tells the angels that Abraham and his descendants are key to human history. They have already seen Abraham's impact with relationship to the Assyrians from the east (an army which was probably 10x or even 100x the size of Abraham's army).

So God is telling these angels, "Watch this man; he will become a great and mighty nation." Recall, there are millions of people on the earth; the angels have no idea who to look at; and God says, "Watch this man, Abraham. He believes in Me. All of the nations of the earth shall be blessed because of him."

For I have known him to the intent that he lay charge upon his sons and his house after him and keep [guard, preserve] the way of Y^ehowah; to do righteousness and justice so that will bring in Y^ehowah upon Abraham He spoke upon him.”

Genesis
18:19

For I have known him to the end that he will instruct his sons and his household after him to [lit., *and*] keep [guard, preserve] the way of Y^ehowah; to do righteousness and justice so that Y^ehowah might bring to pass regarding Abraham that [which] He proclaimed concerning him.”

For I have known him to the end that he will instruct his descendants and his household after him to guard and preserve the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice so that Jehovah might bring to pass regarding Abraham all that He promised him.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	<u>Because his holiness (piety, chasidutha) is manifest before Me, (and) that he will instruct his sons, and the men of his house after him, to keep the ways that are right before the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken concerning him.</u>
Latin Vulgate	For I know that he will command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, and do judgment and justice: that for Abraham's sake, the Lord may bring to effect all the things he hath spoken unto him.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	For I have known him to the intent that he lay charge upon his sons and his house after him and keep [guard, preserve] the way of Y ^e howah; to do righteousness and justice so that will bring in Y ^e howah upon Abraham He spoke upon him.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	For I know him well, and that he will command his children and his household after him, to keep the ways of the LORD, to do justice and righteousness; for the LORD shall fulfil for Abraham the thing that he has spoken concerning him.
Septuagint (Greek)	For I know that he will order his sons, and his house after him, and they will keep the ways of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham all things whatsoever He has spoken to him.
Significant differences:	The targum has some extra phrases. The ancient translations are quite close to the Hebrew. The final phrase is somewhat confusing.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I have formed a relationship with him so that he will oversee his children and his household after him. And they will keep to the LORD's path, being moral and just so that the LORD can do for Abraham everything he said he would.”
Contemporary English V.	I have chosen him to teach his family to obey me forever and to do what is right and fair. Then I will give Abraham many descendants, just as I promised.”
Easy English	I have chosen him. He will lead his children and *household in the right way. So then they too will live in the way that the *Lord wants. They will obey the *Lord and they will act fairly. Therefore the *Lord will do to Abraham as he (the *Lord) has promised.’
Easy-to-Read Version	I have made a special agreement with Abraham. I did this so he would command his children and his descendants [A person’s children and their future families.] to

	live the way the Lord wants them to. I did this so they would live right and be fair. Then I, the Lord, can give him the things I promised."
Good News Bible (TEV)	I have chosen him in order that he may command his sons and his descendants to obey me and to do what is right and just. If they do, I will do everything for him that I have promised."
<i>The Message</i>	Yes, I've settled on him as the one to train his children and future family to observe GOD's way of life, live kindly and generously and fairly, so that GOD can complete in Abraham what he promised him."
New Berkeley Version	For I have known him, so that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD, doing what is right and fair, so that the LORD may bestow upon Abraham what He has told him.
New Century Version	I have chosen him so he would command his children and his descendants to live the way the Lord wants them to, to live right and be fair. Then I, the Lord, will give Abraham what I promised him."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	For I know that he commands his sons and his house after him. Therefore they <i>will</i> keep the way of Yahweh and make righteous edicts." Yahweh came toward Abraham and spoke toward him.
Christian Community Bible	I have known him as a friend, so that he may order his children and his family after him to keep the LORD's ways and do what is right and fair, so that the LORD may do for Abraham what He promised him."
<i>God's Word™</i>	I have chosen him so that he will direct his children and his family after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. In this way I, the LORD, will do what I have promised Abraham."
New American Bible	Indeed, I have singled him out that he may direct his children and his household in the future to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD may put into effect for Abraham the promises he made about him.
NIRV	"I have chosen him. He must direct his children. He must see that the members of his family after him live the way I want them to. So he must direct them to do what is right and fair. Then I, the Lord, will do for Abraham what I have promised him."
New Jerusalem Bible	For I have singled him out to command his sons and his family after him to keep the way of Yahweh by doing what is upright and just, so that Yahweh can carry out for Abraham what he has promised him.'
New Simplified Bible	»I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household; and that they may remain in the righteous and just way of Jehovah. Jehovah will bring to Abraham what he told him.«
Revised English Bible	I have singled him out so that he may charge his sons and family after him to conform to the way of the LORD and do what is right and just; thus I shall fulfil for him all that I have promised.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	For I have made him mine so that he may give orders to his children and those of his line after him, to keep the ways of the Lord, to do what is good and right: so that the Lord may do to Abraham as he has said.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	For I have first instructed him in order that he may command his sons, and the sons of his house after him, that they must keep to the path of the EVER-LIVING, and do

	right and justice, so that the EVER-LIVING may cause to come upon Abraham what He has promised to him."
HCSB	For I have chosen him so that he will command his children and his house after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. This is how the LORD will fulfill to Abraham what He promised him."
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is just and right, in order that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him."
New Advent Bible	For I know that he will command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, and do judgment and justice: that for Abraham's sake, the Lord may bring to effect all the things he has spoken unto him.
NET Bible®	I have chosen him [Heb "For I have known him." The verb ????? (yada') here means "to recognize and treat in a special manner, to choose" (see Amos 3:2). It indicates that Abraham stood in a special covenantal relationship with the Lord.] so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep [Heb "and they will keep." The perfect verbal form with vav consecutive carries on the subjective nuance of the preceding imperfect verbal form (translated "so that he may command")] the way of the LORD by doing [The infinitive construct here indicates manner, explaining how Abraham's children and his household will keep the way of the Lord] what is right and just. Then the LORD will give [Heb "bring on." The infinitive after l ^e ma'an (ועמל) [pronounced l ^e -MAH-ǰahn] indicates result here.] to Abraham what he promised [Heb "spoke to."] him."
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"For I have known him, so that he commands his children and his household after him, to guard the way of יהוה, to do righteousness and right-ruling, so that יהוה brings to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	For I have known (chosen, acknowledged) him [as My own], so that he may teach and command his children and the sons of his house after him to keep the way of the Lord and to do what is just and righteous, so that the Lord may bring Abraham what He has promised him.
Concordant Literal Version	For I know him, that, responding, he will instruct his sons and his household after him, and keep will they the way of Yahweh to do justice and judgment, that Yahweh may bring on Abraham all that He speaks concerning him.
Context Group Version	For I have known him, to the end that he may command his sons and his household after him, that they may keep the way of YHWH, to do vindication and judgment; to the end that YHWH may bring on Abraham that which he has spoken of him.
Darby Translation	For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice, in order that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what he hath spoken of him.
English Standard Version	For I have chosen him, 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 to Abraham what he has promised him."
exeGesés companion Bible	For I know him, that he misvahs his sons and his household after him and they guard the way of Yah Veh, to work justness and judgment; so that Yah Veh brings on Abraham

Fred Miller's Revised KJV	what he words of him. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of The LORD, to do justice and judgment; so that The LORD may bring on Abraham that which he has spoken of him.
Green's Literal Translation	For I have known him, so that whatever he may command his sons and his house after him, even they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the intent that Jehovah may bring on Abraham that which He has spoken of him.
Heritage Bible	And I have known by seeing that he commands his children, and his household after him, and they have 19 hedged about the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and judgment, in order that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what he has spoken of him.. God saw the descendants of Abraham as having already hedged about God's way and having been faithful. The reason that God could see the remnant of Israel faithful, and all believers, was because He was the One who would by His grace keep a remnant of the seed of Israel faithful, as well as believing faithful Christians, who are also the children of Abraham, Rom 4:16.
New RSV	No, for I have chosen* him, that he may charge 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 about for Abraham what he has promised him.'
Syndein	"For I know {yada '} him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah/God, to do/manufacture {'asah - from doctrine in their souls} justice and judgment. That Jehovah/God may bring upon Abraham that which he has communicated categorically {dabar} {to him}."
World English Bible	For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Yahweh may bring on Abraham that which he has spoken of him."
Young's Updated LT	For I have known him, that he commands his children, and his house after him (and they have kept the way of Jehovah), to do righteousness and judgment, that Jehovah may bring on Abraham that which He has spoken concerning him."
The gist of this verse:	God has known Abraham from eternity past, and he would command his descendants to keep the way of Jehovah, to do that which is right and just, for many generations to follow, and that, because of this, God may bring to Abraham that which He has promised him.

Genesis 18:19a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yâda' (יָדָע) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHG</i>]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

Genesis 18:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
l ^e ma'an (למען) [pronounced l ^e -MAH- gahn]	<i>for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, to the intent that, to the purpose that, in order that, in view of, to the end that; so that</i>	compound preposition and substantive which acts like a preposition	Strong's #4616 BDB #775
This is the substantive ma'an (מאן) [pronounced MAH-gahn], which means <i>purpose, intent</i> , combined with the lamed preposition (which is the only way that it is found in Scripture).			
'asher (אשר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, when followed by an imperfect, they mean <i>to the end that</i> . However, when they are followed by a perfect tense, we will render these words as <i>because that</i> .			
tsāvâh (צוּ) [pronounced tsaw-VAW]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge, command, order; to instruct [as in, giving an order]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #6680 BDB #845
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
'achârêy (אַחֲרָי) [pronounced ah-kuh- RAY]	<i>behind, after; following; after that, afterwards; hinder parts</i>	preposition; plural form with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29
The plural form of this preposition occurs more often than the singular, although I am uncertain as to any difference in meaning when used as a preposition.			

Translation: For I have known him to the end that he will instruct his sons and his household after him...

There were concepts of the spiritual life as well as concepts of right and wrong which were taught early on in the history of the world. God has known, from eternity past, that Abraham would so instruct his son, and that this would continue down for many generations after. This instruction would become the Word of God, within which would be contained the spiritual life and the laws of divine establishment (i.e., concepts of right and wrong).

There is a lot to be found here in v. 19. Quite a number of translations read, *For I have chosen him*; but the verb is the Qal perfect of *yâda'* (יָדָעַ) [pronounced *yaw-DAHÇ*], which means, *to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]*. Strong's #3045 BDB #393. God knew Abraham in eternity past. God knew that Abraham would believe in Him, which resulted in the imputation of righteousness (Genesis 15:6).

I have known him is the foreknowledge of God. God, knowing the future, and having made promises to Abraham, and knowing the impact on history which Abraham will have due to his advanced state of spiritual maturity, will use Abraham to illustrate an important point which reveals God's mercy and longsuffering. All the nations of the earth will be blessed in the nation which shall come from Abraham, a nation born out of a salvation choice made by Abraham.

Then we have a series of particles that mean, when followed by an imperfect, *to the end that*. What will Abraham do? The Piel imperfect of *tsâvâh* (צָוָה) [pronounced *tsaw-VAW*], which means, *to commission, to mandate, to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge, command, order; to instruct [as in, giving an order]*. Strong's #6680 BDB #845. Abraham would continue to command and to commission and to instruct his children. How does he do this? First of all, we have the plural noun *children* here, but Abraham only has one child of promise, who is not even born yet. Abraham is not commanding, commissioning and instructing Ishmael, his son by Hagar the Egyptian slave-girl. But Abraham only has one son of promise and that is Isaac. So the plural *children* refers to Abraham's descendants. This gives us, **For I have known him to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children** [i.e., *his descendants*]. How does Abraham do this? It is clear that, even though he will live a long time, he won't go into Egypt where his great grandson Joseph will be prime minister. There is only one way that Abraham can do this, and this is by the Word of God, a portion of which was probably given to him, and a portion of which he will record. Now, the Word of God to Abraham at this time was a few chapters of Genesis and maybe the book of Job. He may have carried this all in his head and he may have committed it to "paper." However, it is via God's Word that he will command and instruct his descendants. It is God's Word which his descendants will continue to hold, protect, guard and add to.

Abraham will not just command and instruct his descendants, but also *his household* (literally, *his house*; but *household* is a legitimate translation). This is very technical. You may recall the concept of **dispensations**, which was given way back in the introductory lessons. Although most people tend to think of a dispensation as a period of time during which God has a particular plan for believers; it actually means *the administration of a household*. Abraham's household is believers in the Jewish Age, which may or may not be related to him. Rahab the Prostitute, for instance, is not related to Abraham, but she will be in the Dispensation of Israel and in the line of Jesus Christ (Joshua 6:25 Matthew 1:5³⁵). The Word of God, which Abraham has possession of, will become a part of her life; and a part of his commandments to his household, the children of Israel, those related to him and those who chose to become a part of Israel.

See the **Doctrine of Dispensations** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

³⁵ There is a great deal of discussion of this question, but it would seem odd to name the woman Rahab in the line of Jesus if this is just some random woman named Rahab. This is because women were generally not named in the line of anyone, must less in the line of the humanity of our Lord.

Free will is key. Abraham had free will. He was not some mind-numbed robot who did whatever God told him to do. He had a sin nature, he went astray; but God knew that he could be trusted with teaching and preserving that which is the hope of humanity.

God knows what Abraham will do in the future. Just as he has taught all those in his household about God, about justice and righteousness, about what it means to do the right thing; so he would pass this down to his son, which would then be passed down to his grandson.

Remember, that God is speaking to the angels right now and telling them why He is going to allow Abraham to have input when it comes to Sodom. This is why Abraham is so great. Abraham is thinking divine viewpoint; he teaches Bible doctrine and the laws of divine establishment; and he is in fellowship with the Lord. Because of this, Abraham is one of the most influential people of all times.

J. Vernon McGee: Abraham is going to have a tremendous influence. He is going to influence multitudes of people, including the succeeding generations. That is true right now today. As I write and as you read this book, Abraham is influencing us - we cannot avoid it.³⁶

As we continue through this verse and combine it with vv. 17–18, bear in mind, God is speaking to angels, two of which can be seen by Abraham, and billions of which cannot. God is teaching the angels who are elect and making a statement to those who are fallen. Abraham can't hear any of this, or, if he can, it does not fully resonate with him because he is not the audience God is speaking to.

Abraham, without the Law, has done the things which are found in the law, and he thereby became a law unto himself (Romans 2:4 Galatians 3:18). What Abraham is about to do will illustrate righteousness to the angels.

Genesis 18:19b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAR</i>]	<i>to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036
derek ^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>DEH-rek^e</i>]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...to [lit., and] keep [guard, preserve] the way of Y^ehowah;...

³⁶ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed January 2, 2014.

The first thing that God expects Abraham and his descendants to do is to keep, guard and preserve the way of Y^ehowah. The preservation of the words of God throughout the next 3000 years is something to behold. God knew that Abraham would mandate that his descendants preserve the way of Jehovah, which is kept by preserving the words of God and God's interaction with man.

The preservation of the words of God is something that has not been done with any set of writings, apart from the books of the New Testament.

Rather than plow ground that has been carefully covered in the past, let me simply offer up some additional resources instead.

Resources for the Preservation of the Old Testament

This first group are pastors who have additional resources and teaching which appear to be very dependable:

Bibliology by Ron Snider

The Doctrine of Canonicity by Bill Wenstrom

A General Introduction to the Bible by Norman Geisler and William Nix. For me, this is the gold standard for those who would like to learn more about what it means *to be inspired by God* and how the canon was selected and how the words of God were preserved. They spend over 100 pages describing and explaining how the Bible was preserved and transmitted.

The Josh McDowell *evidence* books (except for *Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Part II*). A portion of these books discuss logical proofs for the inspiration of God's Word.

I wrote 3 papers on the Inspiration of Scripture, drawing heavily from these two resources, and they may be accessed here: <http://kukis.org/page10.html>

And from the internet, here are some fairly short papers on this topic:

How the Old Testament Was Preserved by Wesley White

How was the Old Testament Transmitted? From **The story behind the Bible's Origin**.

A Survey of the Documents and History of the Bible compiled by Jack Moorman

How Did We Get the Old Testament? By Jeremy Lyon

The Preservation of the Bible: The Transmission, Ancestry, and Canon of Scripture by David E. Pratte

God's Providential Preservation of the Scriptures by Gary La More

I could not guarantee the rest of these various websites for latter collection of doctrines; but certainly these articles appear to be fairly good.

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Genesis 18:19c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
‘âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
ts ^e dâqâh (צַדִּיקָה) [pronounced ts ^e daw-KAW]	<i>righteousness, executed righteousness and justice, righteous vindication</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6666 BDB #842
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mîsh ^e pâṭ (מִשְׁפָּט) [pronounced mish ^e -PAWT]	<i>judgement, justice, a verdict rendered by a judge, a judicial decision, a judicial sentence, a verdict, a judgement of the court</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4941 BDB #1048

Gesenius organizes the meanings as follows:

(1) *a judgement*; including:

(a) *the act of judging*; (b) *the place of judgment*; (c) *a forensic cause, the setting forth of a cause, to appeal a judgment*; (d) *the sentence of a judge*; (e) *the fault or crime one is judged for*;

(2) *a right, that which is just, lawful according to law*; which set of meanings would include:

(a) *a law, a statute; a body of laws*; (b) *that which is lawfully due a person, a privilege, a legal privilege, the right of redemption, the right of primogeniture*; (c) *a manner, a custom*; (d) *a fashion, a kind, a plan*.

We could possibly add the meanings for the plural: *laws, responsibilities, privileges*. From the standpoint of the one under judgment, mîshepâṭ could mean *appeal*.

Translation: ...to do righteousness and justice...

Doing righteousness and justice has two applications. There is the application for the believer. Doing righteousness and justice is functioning while in fellowship with God, which means having no unconfessed sin in one's life and then learning the Word of God.

With regards to society in general and Israel in particular, God developed a number of laws designed for believers and unbelievers alike, which we call the laws of divine establishment. It is man's responsibility to develop and preserve an orderly society, which may be preserved by a democracy and may be preserve by an autocratic body or person.

Most of us, having been raised in a democracy, believe that a democracy is key to a great government. We are about to see that this is incorrect. I write this in early 2012 where the Arab spring is an ongoing thing (the people of Egypt, Syria, Libya and many other countries are revolting against their autocratic rulers). We see this as a wonderful thing, because, we reason, these rulers are vicious, tyrannical, and they repress their own people. However, we do not see the other side of this. Their own people are vicious, tyrannical and will repress all that

they disagree with. So, even though Egypt has recently had a *free election* and the people have chosen their governing body, what has come to pass is vicious and horrendous attacks upon believers in Jesus Christ. Churches have been plundered; Christian communities have been attacked; people have been killed and homes have been burned to the ground. Now, under a strong ruler—under a vicious tyrant—this would not occur. However, under rulers who want to appease the evil thinking of these people, these things occur, and little is done to stop them.

The key to doing righteousness and justice as a society are the laws of divine establishment. The key is in setting boundaries and laws and punishment which will keep this people in line, so that the Word of God may be taught, even in the midst of a lot of angry Muslims.

Application: When we invaded Iraq and Afghanistan, this is where President George W. Bush missed the key element in developing a true alliance with these two countries, while, simultaneously, destroying the bad guys in those countries. He thought if we established law and order, killed the bad guys, and poured money into these countries to establish education and businesses, that everything would be okay. President Bush was far more cognizant of American history and he knew that these things had been done before, which resulted in marvelous alliances that we have had with Germany, Japan and South Korea, the former two being our enemies in WWII. But he left out the key ingredient, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the teaching of the Word of God, and religious freedom to be preserved in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Application: There were times in our relationship with Iraq and Afghanistan where we called the shots; where we could impose our will on them. For instance, in both countries, we insisted on a democratic government. At these points in time, when our influence was strongest, we needed to establish churches and the teaching of the Word of God. It could have been done simply on the basis of our troops needing churches that they could attend. Would there have been danger? Certainly. Anytime you introduce the Word of God to such vicious paganism, some would react with great anger. However, if we are going to nation-build, then that is the only way to nation-build. This is why we have such an amicable relationship with South Korea and such animus from North Korea. South Korea is filled with believers in Jesus Christ. The Word of God is taught regularly throughout South Korea and they send out missionaries all over the world. That is key to our friendship with them. Unfortunately, our dealings with Iraq and Afghanistan were much different, where soldiers were prevented from sharing their faith in Jesus Christ and from giving Bibles to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. When this became our modus operandi, that was the signal that our relationship with the people of these two countries was doomed. The darkness of Islam will soon pervade their souls (I write this in 2012), and they will see us as their enemies, despite all that we have done for them.

I had mentioned in an earlier lesson that the way that truth and justice and righteousness was passed down from generation to generation was by means of the teaching of the parents. Furthermore, I gave the examples of the many sets of laws that were developed at this time, which had to be an outgrowth of good teaching.

Abraham is just not the recipient of such good teaching, but because of him, the laws of divine establishment will continue to be taught for many generations in his line. Furthermore, these laws, as well as a complete Christology will be codified and given to the Jewish people, who will dutifully preserve these documents, so that we have excellent copies of copies of copies of these manuscripts even today.

Genesis 18:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
לְמַ'אן (לְמַ'אן) [pronounced <i>l^e-MAH- gahn</i>]	<i>for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, to the intent that, to the purpose that, in order that, in view of, to the end that; so that</i>	compound preposition and substantive which acts like a preposition	Strong's #4616 BDB #775
This is the substantive ma'an (מַ'אן) [pronounced <i>MAH-gahn</i>], which means <i>purpose, intent</i> , combined with the lâmed preposition (which is the only way that it is found in Scripture).			
בֹּו' (אוּב) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to take in, to bring [near, against, upon], to come in with, to carry, to cause to come [in], to gather, to bring to pass</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #935 BDB #97
When placed before an object, an infinitive construct generally acts like a verb, particularly when preceded by lâmed. The lâmed with an infinitive construct generally expresses purpose or result, although it can have three other common uses with the infinitive: (1) It can have a gerundial or adverbial sense to explain the circumstances of a previous action; (2) it can act as a periphrastic future in nominal clauses; and, (3) it can behave as a gerund, in the sense of <i>is to be, must be, ought to be</i> . ³⁷ (4) Lâmed with the infinitive can connote <i>shall or must</i> . ³⁸			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
עַל (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
BDB gives the following meanings for this verb: 1) <i>upon, on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, beside, in addition to, together with, beyond, above, over, by, on to, towards, to, against (preposition); 1a) upon, on the ground of, on the basis of, on account of, because of, therefore, on behalf of, for the sake of, for, with, in spite of, notwithstanding, concerning, in the matter of, as regards; 1b) above, beyond, over (of excess); 1c) above, over (of elevation or pre-eminence); 1d) upon, to, over to, unto, in addition to, together with, with (of addition); 1e) over (of suspension or extension); 1f) by, adjoining, next, at, over, around (of contiguity or proximity); 1g) down upon, upon, on, from, up upon, up to, towards, over towards, to, against (with verbs of motion); 1h) to (as a dative); 2) because that, because, notwithstanding, although (conjunction).</i>			

³⁷ the bulk of this was paraphrased from J.C.L. Gibson, *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar-Syntax*; 4th Edition, © T&T Clark Ltd., 1994, pp. 127–132 and from *Biblical Hebrew*; by Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, p. 434.

³⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 438.

Genesis 18:19d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'al (עַל) [pronounced gah/]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Translation: ...so that Y^ehowah might bring to pass regarding Abraham that [which] He proclaimed concerning him.”

Twice, we have the unusual preposition 'al, where we might have expected a lâmed preposition. However, what God will do through the people of Israel is related to Abraham; Abraham is foundational in this regard. However, when God lays out the laws for nation Israel, He will do this through Moses.

So far, this gives us:

Genesis 18:19 For I have known him to the end that he will instruct his sons and his household after him to [lit., and] keep [guard, preserve] the way of Y^ehowah; to do righteousness and justice so that Y^ehowah might bring to pass regarding Abraham that [which] He proclaimed concerning him.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:19 For I have known him to the end that he will instruct his descendants and his household after him to guard and preserve the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice so that Jehovah might bring to pass regarding Abraham all that He promised him.” {Kukis paraphrase

Gen 18:19 For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., his descendants] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him to keep [lit., and they have kept (guarded, protected, preserved)] the way of Y^ehowah by doing righteousness and justice, so that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

After him refers to those who would follow Abraham. He is the first, and there is a long line behind him, *after him*, just described as his children and his household.

The word *to keep* is a very common word in the Hebrew: *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*], which means, *to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. Here, it is in the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect, which generally indicates a past, completed action. It is often translated as an infinitive (*to keep*), but it should really read *and they have kept (guarded, protected, preserved)*.

God is outside of time, which is a difficult concept for us to wrap our minds around, as we experience time by each instant at a time in a linear fashion. God invented time, but He is not confined to time. So here, God is saying, that these descendants and believers have preserved, protected and guarded something.

We have discussed in a previous lesson what the spiritual life was for people of this era. See the **Doctrine of the Spiritual Life** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). Another way of describing this spiritual life is, *the way of Jehovah*, which phrase is found for the first time here in this verse. This spiritual life includes salvation, fellowship with God, spiritual growth, and a system of animal sacrifices. This is all recorded in the Word of God, which is what we are studying right now. These words were the Bible for Jews in the Age of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are known as the patriarchs—the fathers—of Israel).

Although it is certainly possible that this was transmitted verbally, we have instances of writings from this general era. Given that Abraham knew a great many people and was able to communicate with several peoples in this land and in Egypt (suggesting that he could speak several languages), Abraham probably had some exposure to the written word. So I would think that the words that we are studying were written down by Abraham, probably the bulk of which originally came from Melchizedek.³⁹

Let's look at what we have developed so far (bearing in mind that God is speaking to these angels; and, by application, to all angels, who are watching Him).

Gen 18:19 For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., his descendants] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [guarded, protected, preserved] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers in that era] to do righteousness and justice, to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

After the way of Y^ehowah, we have the *lâmed* preposition followed by an infinitive: *to do righteousness and justice*. *Righteousness* is the principle of God's character or God's integrity; *justice* is the function or the execution of God's character or integrity. For instance, it is wrong to kill someone; that violates God's righteousness. Justice would mete out punishment for committing that crime. Righteousness condemns the action; justice carries out God's proper response to the action (and God has designed humankind to act on His behalf—Romans 13:1–5).

³⁹ Let me remind you of the logic here. Abraham has spoken to God on several occasions. However, he appears to be deferential to Melchizedek, since he pays him tithes. This suggests to me that Melchizedek had something that Abraham did not have, which is, most logically, the Word of God (Genesis 1–11 or 1–12).

Doing righteousness and justice is acting in accordance to the plan of God. *Justice* implies a sort of government; a corporate approach to wrongdoing. Eventually, the nation Israel would come from Abraham, and they would be given a set of laws that define righteousness and a set of judgments, which would define the penalties for deviating from this righteous standard. It is not *Abraham* who is to do righteousness and justice; it is his descendants and his household after him. From Abraham's time, this is a future event, and it will take place over a long period of time; sometimes the way of the Lord will be kept (guarded, preserved) and sometimes it will be lost. However, from the viewpoint of God, Who is speaking, this has already happened. In the past, according to His plan, Israel kept and preserved the way of the Lord. The end result is, God would deliver on his promises to Abraham.

So, again, notice a typical translation of v. 19:

Gen 18:19 For I have known him, 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 to Abraham what He has promised him."

Now, when we look at the actual Hebrew, this is a more accurate translation:

Gen 18:19 For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., his descendants] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [guarded, protected, preserved] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers of that era] to do righteousness [the principle of God's integrity] and justice [the function of God's integrity], to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

Finally, what God will bring to Abraham is the fulfillment of His many promises to Abraham. These promises would all begin with a son, laughter in the belly of Sarah.

God sees all of this as having occurred, even though this is all future to Abraham at this time. These words which God speaks reveals a great many things about the future of Abraham's seed, about what God expects, but of Abraham's descendants and from other believers who adhere to Israel; and about what nation Israel will become. Israel will preserve and protect the way of the Lord, which means, they will preserve the Word of God; and they will do righteousness and justice, which means that nation Israel will adhere to the **laws of divine establishment**. All of this comes to pass so that God may bring to Abraham what He has promised him.

Again, all of these words are actually spoken to millions of angels, who are watching millions of people interact, and God focuses their attention on this one man, Abraham, telling them, this is the man to watch. This man will affect all human history.

Here is what we have studied so far:

Genesis 18:16–18 And the men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham was going with them to bring them on the way. And Jehovah said, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, And Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the persons of the earth shall be blessed in him? (MKJV).

God is speaking to these two angels, who will soon bring judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah; and telling them what will happen with Abraham in the future.

Gen 18:19 For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., his descendants] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [guarded,

protected, preserved] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers of that era] to do righteousness [the principle of God's integrity] and justice [the function of God's integrity], to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

Now God explains why Sodom and Gomorrah are under judgment.

And so says Y^ehowah, "A cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, for she is great; and their sin, because she is very heavy,...

Genesis
18:20

Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very weighty,...

Then Jehovah said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is so exceedingly grievous,...

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the Lord said to the ministering angels, The cry of Sedom and Amorah, <u>because they oppress the poor, and decree that whosoever giveth a morsel to the needy shall be burned with fire</u> , is therefore great, and their guilt exceedingly weighty.
Latin Vulgate	And the Lord said: The cry of Sodom and Gomorrha is multiplied, and their sin is become exceedingly grievous.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Y ^e howah, "A cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, for she is great; and their sin, because she is very heavy,...
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah <u>has come before Me</u> and their sins are very grievous,...
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah <u>has been increased towards Me</u> , and their sins are very great...
Significant differences:	The targum has additional text. The second to the last phrase in the Syriac and Greek are different from the Hebrew and the Latin.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Then the LORD said, "The cries of injustice from Sodom and Gomorrah are countless, and their sin is very serious!
Contemporary English V.	The LORD said, "Abraham, I have heard that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are doing all kinds of evil things.
Easy English	So the *Lord said, `The citizens in Sodom and Gomorrah have made very many people suffer. They have *sinned very greatly. So I must punish them.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then the Lord said, "I have heard many times that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are very evil.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then the LORD said to Abraham, "There are terrible accusations against Sodom and Gomorrah, and their sin is very great..
<i>The Message</i>	GOD continued, "The cries of the victims in Sodom and Gomorrah are deafening; the sin of those cities is immense.

New Century Version	Then the Lord said, "I have heard many complaints against the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They are very evil.
New Life Bible	Then the Lord said, "The cry against Sodom and Gomorrah is loud. Their sin is very bad.
New Living Translation	So the LORD told Abraham, "I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then the Lord said, 'The cries that I'm hearing about Sodom and Gomorrah keep growing, and their sins are very bad.
Ancient Roots Translinear	Yahweh said, "Sodom and Gomorrah cry, for they are-heavy a hundredfold with many sins.
Christian Community Bible	Then Yahweh said, "How great is the cry for justice against Sodom and Gomorrah! And how grievous is their sin!
God's Word™	The LORD also said, "Sodom and Gomorrah have many complaints against them, and their sin is very serious.
New American Bible	So the LORD said: The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave,... The immorality of the cities was already hinted at in 13:13, when Lot made his choice to live there. The "outcry" comes from the victims of the injustice and violence rampant in the city, which will shortly be illustrated in the treatment of the visitors. The outcry of the Hebrews under the harsh treatment of Pharaoh (Ex 3:7) came up to God who reacts in anger at mistreatment of the poor (cf. Ex 22:21-23; Is 5:7). Sodom and Gomorrah became types of sinful cities in biblical literature. Is 1:9-10; 3:9 sees their sin as lack of social justice, Ez 16:46-51, as disregard for the poor, and Jer 23:14, as general immorality. In the Genesis story, the sin is violation of the sacred duty of hospitality by the threatened rape of Lot's guests. Gn 19:13; Is 3:9; Lk 17:28; Jude 7.
NIRV	The Lord said, "The cries against Sodom and Gomorrah are very great. Their sin is so bad...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And the Lord said, Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is very great, and their sin is very evil,...
Complete Jewish Bible	ADONAI said, "The outcry against S'dom and 'Amora is so great and their sin so serious...
Ferar-Fenton Bible	So the LORD continued: "Sodom and Gomorrah shriek, for their sins are many; and are very grievous.
HCSB	Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is immense, and their sin is extremely serious.
NET Bible®	So the LORD said, "The outcry against [Heb "the outcry of Sodom," which apparently refers to the outcry for divine justice from those (unidentified persons) who observe its sinful ways.] Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so blatant [Heb "heavy."]...
NIV, ©2011	Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And the Lord said, Because the shriek [of the sins] of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is exceedingly grievous,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Yahweh, "Seeing that the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is much, and that their sin is exceedingly heavy,...
Context Group Version	And YHWH said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their disgrace is very grievous;...
English Standard Version	Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,...
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yah Veh says, Because the cry of Sedom and Amorah is great and because their sin is mighty heavy;...
New RSV	Then the Lord said, `How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin
A Voice in the Wilderness	And Jehovah said, The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is exceedingly heavy...
World English Bible	Yahweh said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, ...
Young's Updated LT	And Jehovah says, "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah—because great; and their sin—because exceeding grievous,...

The gist of this verse: Y^ehowah says that the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is grievous.

Genesis 18:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
z ^e câqâh (צַעֲקָה) [pronounced <i>z^eh-gaw-KAW</i>]	<i>cry, outrage, cry of distress, outcry</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #2201 BDB #277
Sedum (שְׂדֹמ) [pronounced <i>sehd-OHM</i>]	<i>burning; which is transliterated Sodom</i>	masculine singular locative noun	Strong's #5467 BDB #690
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 18:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Āămôrâh (עָמֹרָה) [pronounced <i>ăhm-oh-RAW</i>]	<i>submersion</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Gomorrah</i>	feminine singular proper noun:	Strong's #6017 BDB #771

Translation: Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah..."

Note that we have the phrase **And Y^ehowah said...** twice; in v. 17 and then again in v. 20. This suggests that God is first speaking to the angels; but then He speaks to the angels and Abraham. You will notice that there is no intervening narrative and no one says anything; so, the only reason to repeat *and Y^ehowah said*, is to direct these words to someone else.

The *because* will occur in the next section of this verse. It is an odd construction, but it appears as though the two *because*s belong at the beginning of each clause.

Z^eâqâh (צִעָקָה) [pronounced *z^eh-ăaw-KAW*] is a shriek or a cry; it can be a cry of distress and it can be a outcry against a people (which is what it is here). Their degeneracy is almost beyond conception and the lack of law and order make it utterly impossible for the gospel to be presented. God must eliminate this group of people because of their depravity and immorality. It had become so gross that it cried out to God.

We do not know in what sense there was an outcry. Based upon what happens in the following verse, people were regularly subject to rape and homosexual rape in both Sodom and Gomorrah. It will appear as though Lot is barely tolerated and accepted.

One would reasonably guess that people who wandered through these lands—and many would on a trading route—would be subject to being raped. The raping was by male homosexuals.

So far, we have: **Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah..."** Abraham knows that this is where Lot is.

Genesis 18:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Owen and the KJV+ Bible in e-sword have this verb:			
râbab (רָבַב) [pronounced <i>raw^b-VAH^bV</i>]	<i>to become many, to become great in number, to be great in number, to increase</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7231 BDB #912

E-sword's KJV+TVM and <http://qbible.com/hebrew-old-testament/genesis/18.html> offers this word instead, which is a feminine singular adjective:

Genesis 18:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
rabbâh (רַבָּה) [pronounced rahb-BAW]	<i>many, much, great</i> (in the sense of large or significant, not acclaimed)	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #7227 BDB #912

Since this phrase matches up well with the one below, it is reasonable to take the verb instead of the adjective.

Although the explanatory conjunction precedes this verb, I will assume that it may reasonably precede the subject of the verb as well (v. 20a). It is simply unusual for a portion of the clause to occur before the beginning conjunction/preposition as we have here.

Translation: ...is great...

The sexual desires of homosexuals were out of control. They had become roving bands of violent men who would attack and rape whomever they desired.

Genesis 18:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
chattâ'th (חַטָּאת) [pronounced khat-TAWTH]	<i>misstep, slip of the foot; sin; sinfulness; a sin-offering; penalty, calamity, misfortune</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #2403 BDB #308
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
kâbêd (כָּבֵד) [pronounced kaw ^b -VADE]	<i>to honor, to glorify, to recognize; to be great, to be vehement, to be heavy, weighty, burdensome</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3513 BDB #457
m ^e ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced m ^e -ODE]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

Translation: ...and because their sin is very weighty,...

His ears perk up immediately, in hearing God speak of their sins as being grave. The noun here is the feminine singular of chattâ'th (חַטָּאת) [pronounced khat-TAWTH], which means *misstep, slip of the foot; sin; sinfulness; a sin-offering; penalty, calamity, misfortune*. Strong's #2403 BDB #308. Notice that it is in the singular here. That would reasonably indicate that there is a trend or a specific type of degeneracy which has overtaken these cities.

Sin is in the singular, gathering the totality of their degeneracy into an effective whole. It could have been translated *their depravity is very grave*. This shows that we have an English equivalent and that the word sin in the singular can stand for not just the old sin nature but for the totality of their immorality.

Is grave is one word, a verb, the Qal perfect of *kâbêd* (כָּבֵד) [pronounced *kaw^b-VADE*] and it means *to be heavy, burdensome, weighty*. Their degeneracy has reached a point to where it has weighed them down; it has become a burden to society as a whole.

Sin is spoken of here in the singular. It had become very weighty upon this people, meaning that it drove them and their actions. Although most of us have never seen or faced anything like this, we do know that this occurs with many drug addicts, who will do anything to anyone in order to score their drugs.

In Sodom and Gomorrah, there was both a sexual lust and a blood lust which drove the population to commit horrible acts.

Now, look back for an instant at what God has been talking about: *the way of Y^ehowah, executing righteousness and justice*. Although this was specifically tied to Abraham and his progeny, it is also related to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, which will follow. There is no real righteousness in Sodom. Justice is not being meted out. Lot is a judge in Sodom, and yet, there is no justice in Sodom.

There is a lesson here which is important for all believers to understand: Abraham has no political power; he has never run for office, he has never voted for anyone. Because of his place in history, God has put Abraham in touch with several prominent political figures, but Abraham's relationship to them is not to get them to adhere to this or that political system or to this or that political party. However, Abraham has already had tremendous impact on the surrounding city-states and will continue to have such an impact, for years into the future, even beyond his death, as v. 19 tells us. Lot, on the other hand, was very politically involved—he became a judge. He wields a great deal of political influence over Sodom; and yet, Sodom is about to be destroyed.

Genesis 18:20 Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very weighty,..." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:20 Then Jehovah said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is so exceedingly grievous,..." (Kukis paraphrase)

Gen 18:20 Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,

What has come to God is a *z^eâqâh* (צַעֲקָה) [pronounced *z^eh-âgaw-KAW*], which means, *a cry, an outrage, a cry of distress, an outcry*. Strong's #2201 BDB #277. There is no preposition that means *against* here. This *outcry* is in the construct state, so it is properly translated *the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah*. This outcry has become great to God, which suggests that great evil is being done in Sodom and Gomorrah—evil which is not tempered with justice. Things are happening in Sodom which should outrage the people; the people should recognize this as unrighteousness. They should be demanding justice. Lot, as a judge, ought to be standing up for what is right; and yet, all of this appears to be beyond his jurisdiction (not legally, but actually).

What is happening in Sodom and Gomorrah is, there were roving bands of insatiable homosexuals who would rape those traveling through their town with impunity. Everyone knew that this was occurring; all of the males in the town had become a part of this. Although this may seem odd or even far-fetched, when criminal males are confined in prison, one of the greatest fears of new prisoners is being subjected to homosexual rape or homosexual domination by another male. If this sort of thing is ignored, it become more prevalent; if it is tamped down, it becomes less so. This will be covered in greater detail when we come to Genesis 19.

Recall again that righteousness is the principle of integrity and justice is the administration of integrity. Righteousness would be the standard, “**You will not murder.**” Justice would be finding and arresting the murderer and bringing him into the court system for execution or incarceration.

As a teacher, I observed the importance of the administration of justice on many occasions. When one student did something wrong, all of the students expected some form of justice to be dispensed. Ultimately, at the school where I taught, for the most unrighteous behavior, parent phone calls, parent conferences, swats, detention, suspension and/or expulsion were the possible outcomes. Two of the strongest punishment were swats and expulsion, which consequences were eventually removed from our school system. What remained, as our schools became more liberalized, were not as effective, and unrighteousness among our youth flourished.

As an aside, this is just as necessary in prison, where people have been confined for their behavior already. There needs to be a system of laws and regulations in place that are fair, where wrong behavior is met with consequences. In other words, unrighteous behavior is handled with justice. Otherwise, inmates, who are already prone to anti-social behavior, become even more out-of-control.

When errant behavior is not clearly recognized and dealt with, then society (of any sort) begins to fall apart. This is what was occurring in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Gen 18:20 Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,

The final verb is the Qal perfect of *kâbêd* (כָּבֵד) [pronounced *kaw^b-VADE*], which means *to honor, to glorify, to recognize; to be great, to be vehement, to be heavy, weighty, burdensome*, Strong's #3513 BDB #457. The idea is, their sin—this great degenerate sin—has become very burdensome upon the people there. This degeneracy trend has begun to infect much of the population in this area, to a point that it is weighing down these people. Their degeneracy and their choice not to mete out justice means that God will have to be the One to mete out justice.

A degenerate sin is a sin that is associated with pleasure or gratification and this sin can spread throughout a population. This is an addictive sin which brings pleasure and is practiced by greater and greater numbers of the population. What comes to mind is, drug addictions, alcoholism, gambling, and various sexual addictions. This occurs in many societies and in all subgroups of society.

Let me give you an example of an addiction: gambling and Wall Street. At one time, Wall Street performed the honorable function of taking money that people wanted to invest and it funneled this money to public companies, who would use this money to expand their business. Although some people throw money at stocks in a way that is gambling, for the most part, this became an accepted way for investors to choose companies in which to invest. Mutual funds became a way to spread out the risk, so, whereas I, individually, might only be able to invest in 1–10 stocks, by investing in a mutual fund, my money would be pooled with others to be invested into hundreds of stocks, thus reducing the risk of loss. This investment allows for my capital to flow from the cans in the backyard where it is buried to the coffers of hundreds of various companies, who use this money to expand and improve their businesses. You may have some great ideas, but it requires a certain amount of capital to get this idea off the ground; and then additional capital to expand the business. That is the original function of Wall Street, to act as a go-between, between private capital and public businesses.

However, what has happened is, Wall Street has evolved to where you can simply “bet” on the market or a stock or a sector or a commodity going up or going down. No longer is money from the investor going into the coffers of a business or a group of businesses, but people are now making bets on the market, and Wall Street is holding the bets, and skimming their take from the top. So the gambling aspect of Wall Street has infected all of Wall

Street; and money invested no longer flows from the investor into a company. Too often, that money is simply making a bet.

In a similar fashion, American Airlines might contract with Standard Oil to buy jet fuel at a particular price 1 year in the future, and Standard Oil agrees to this. This is a normal and legitimate business transaction. However, this has become infected with gambling, so that Charlie Brown, who wouldn't even know what jet fuel looks like, may begin making bets on the price of jet fuel 6 months or a year down the road, as if he were making a contract to buy it, but he has no intention of buying any jet fuel. His "agreement" to buy jet fuel is a bet, hoping that someone 6 months from now will agree to purchase his agreement, and pay the amount he offered. Essentially, it is gambling.

Now, I am not anti-Wall Street, nor do I object to people on Wall Street making decent salaries. However, it has degenerated into a sophisticated gambling casino which is addictive to some people, including the people who work there.

Sodom and Gomorrah have degenerated to a point where God must bring judgment upon these cities. Lot, a believer, now a judge in Sodom, has absolutely no impact whatsoever on his community, even though he clearly recognizes what is going on and that it is wrong (this will all come out as we go further into this narrative, which will continue in Genesis 19).

There is one word which can be translated in two different ways, which will account for the dramatic difference of translations which follow.

...and so let Me go down, I pray you, and I will see whether according to her crying out—the one coming unto Me—they have done a complete destruction and, if not, I should know."

Genesis
18:21

...then I ought to go down now and see whether, according to her crying out—the [crying out] coming to Me, they have manufactured complete destruction [or, ...then I will go down and see whether they have done all according to the crying out [which is] coming to Me;...]; and, if not, I should know."

...then I ought to go down now to see whether they have manufactured a complete destruction, as is Sodom's crying out which has come to Me. If not, then I should know that as well."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

I will now appear, and see whether, as the cry of a damsel torn away, which ascends before Me, they have made completion of their sins; (or, whether they have made an end of their sins;) and if they have wrought repentance, shall they not be as (if) innocent before Me? and as if not knowing, I will not punish.

Jerusalem targum

Now will I appear and see, according as the cry of the people of Sodom and Amorah hath ascended before Me, whether they have made a complete end. It may be, that some among these sinners do not know that their works of evil are manifest before Me. And if they seek to work repentance, behold, they shall be considered

before Me as if those works had not been known. This appears to be this and the previous verse.

Latin Vulgate	I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry that is come to me; or whether it be not so, that I may know.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	...and so let Me go down, I pray you, and see whether according to her crying out—the one coming unto Me—they have done a complete destruction and, if not, I should know.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to their cry which has come before me; and if not, I will know.
Septuagint (Greek)	I will therefore go down and see, if they completely correspond with the cry which comes to Me, and if not, I will know.

Significant differences: The particle of entreaty in the Hebrew does not appear to be found in any of the ancient translations, except for the Syriac, where it is translated *now*.

The targums have all kinds of extra stuff, little of which is very helpful.

There is a phrase in the Hebrew which is difficult to translate. The Latin, Greek and Syriac move that phrase, so that they translate it ***if they have done all according to their cry which has come before Me***. The phrase bolded is the phrase in question. The alternative translation is *according to her crying out—the one coming unto Me—they have done a complete destruction*. This dramatic difference is based upon one word, which will be discussed in the Hebrew exegesis.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I will go down now to examine the cries of injustice that have reached me. Have they really done all this? If not, I want to know.”
Contemporary English V.	Now I am going down to see for myself if those people really are that bad. If they aren't, I want to know about it.”
Easy English	The sufferers protest that those citizens have *sinned very badly. So I will go down there. And then I will see whether they have really *sinned so badly. I will make sure about that.’
Easy-to-Read Version	So I will go and see if things are as bad as I have heard. Then I will know for sure.”
Good News Bible (TEV)	I must go down to find out whether or not the accusations which I have heard are true.”
<i>The Message</i>	I'm going down to see for myself, see if what they're doing is as bad as it sounds. Then I'll know.”
New Berkeley Version	I will now go down and see whether their behavior is like the outcry that has reached Me, and if not, I will know.”
New Living Translation	I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know.”

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So, I'm going down to see if they are as bad as the cries that I'm hearing say. And if not, at least I will know [for sure].
Ancient Roots Translinear	I will descend to see the cry coming at me. Their doings will finish and if not, I will know.”

Christian Community Bible	I'm going down to see whether or not they've done everything I'm told by those who cry to Me. I want to know."
God's Word™	I must go down and see whether these complaints are true. If not, I will know it."
New American Bible	...that I must go down to see whether or not their actions are as bad as the cry against them that comes to me. I mean to find out.
NIRV	...that I will go down and see for myself. I want to see if what they have done is as bad as the cries that have reached me. If it is not, then I will know."
New Jerusalem Bible	...that I shall go down and see whether or not their actions are at all as the outcry reaching me would suggest. Then I shall know.'
New Simplified Bible	»I will go down now and see whether they have done the bad things I have been told. Then I will know.«
Revised English Bible	I shall go down and see whether their deeds warrant the outcry reaching me. I must know the truth.'
Today's NIV	...that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	...I will go down now, and see if their acts are as bad as they seem from the outcry which has come to me; and if they are not, I will see
Complete Jewish Bible	...that I will now go down and see whether their deeds warrant the outcry that has reached me; if not, I will know."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	I have therefore come down and I will see what causes the shrieks that have come to Me: have they full cause? If not, I will know."
HCSB	I will go down to see if what they have done justifies the cry that has come up to Me. If not, I will find out."
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	I will go down to see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has reached Me; if not, I will take note."
Judaica Press Complete T.	...I will descend now and see, whether according to her cry, which has come to Me, they have done; I will wreak destruction upon them; and if not, I will know."
New Advent Bible	I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry that has come to me; or whether it be not so, that I may know.
NET Bible®	...that I must go down [The cohortative indicates the Lord's resolve. 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.] and see if they are as wicked as the outcry suggests [Heb "[if] 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, finds it hard to believe that anyone could be as bad as the "outcry" against Sodom and Gomorrah suggests.]. If not [The short phrase if not provides a ray of hope and inspires Abraham's intercession.], I want to know."
New Heart English Bible	...I will go down now, and see whether their deeds are as bad as the reports which have come to me. If not, I will know."
NIV – UK	...that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	...I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether [as vilely and wickedly] as is the cry of it which has come to Me; and if not, I will know
Concordant Literal Version	...descend will I, pray, and see, do they according to all the cry which is coming to Me? And if not, I will know.
Context Group Version	I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to its [Sodom's] cry, which has come to me; and if not, I will know.
English Standard V. – UK	...I will go down to see whether they have done altogether [Or they deserve destruction; Hebrew they have made a complete end] according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."
exeGesés companion Bible	...I now descend and see whether they have fully worked according to the cry thereof, which comes to me: and if not, I know.
Green's Literal Translation	I will go down and see if they have at all done according to the cry coming to Me. And if not, I will know.
Heritage Bible	I will descend now, and see if they have done completely according to the cry coming to me, and if not, I will know by seeing..
Modern KJV	...I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which has come to Me. And if not, I will know.
NASB	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."
New RSV	I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know.'
Young's Updated LT	...I go down now, and see whether according to its cry which is coming unto Me they have done completely—and if not—I know;"

The gist of this verse: The Lord says that He wants to go down to Sodom and Gomorrah to see if the outcry of their sin is as bad as it appears to be.

Genesis 18:21a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	to descend, to go down	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the voluntative hê	Strong's #3381 BDB #432

The voluntative hê; that is, it ends with *âh*, not to indicate a feminine ending (although the meaning is similar), but this indicates that with the verb in the 1st person, we should have the additional words *let me, allow me to*. The 1st person Qal may require the additional word *may, might, ought, should*. Surprisingly enough, I have found nothing concerning the voluntative hê in any of my reference books (Gibson, Mansoor, Zodhiates or Kelley), but Owen points it out again and again, and the many translators of Scripture go along with this. This appears to be tacked onto imperatives to smooth them out and to recognize the volition of the person being spoken to.

Genesis 18:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609

Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2nd person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Genesis 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Genesis 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Genesis 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word *let*.

Translation: ...then I ought to go down now...

Let's put this together with the previous verse: Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very weighty, then I ought to go down now... As is often the case, God's words are very difficult to unravel. Most narratives are reasonably simple; but often, when God speaks, the words and sentences which He uses tend to be quite complex.

Here, we have both the voluntative hê and the particle of entreaty. If this were a subject speaking to a sovereign, this would very simply ...then I may go down, if you please... However, this is the Sovereign of the Universe speaking to angels, but so that Abraham could hear.

Genesis 18:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
hă (ה) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i>		Strong's #none BDB #209
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
ts ^e âqâh (צָעָה) [pronounced tz ^e -gaw-KAW]	<i>outcry, cry, a crying out</i>	Feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #6818 BDB #858

Genesis 18:21b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>the one entering [coming, going, advancing] [in]; he who enters [goes, comes (in)]</i>	feminine singular, Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
kâlâh (כָּלָה) [pronounced kaw-LAW]	<i>completion, complete destruction, consumption, annihilation</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3617 BDB #478
There are two words that are spelled identically; the other is the adverb below:			
kâlâh (כָּלָה) [pronounced kaw-LAW]	<i>completely, altogether</i>	adverb	Strong's #3617 BDB #478

Translation: ...and see whether, according to her crying out—the [crying out] coming to Me, they have manufactured complete destruction [or, ...then I will go down and see whether they have done all according to the crying out [which is] coming to Me;...];...

Again, there is another difficulty here. The *crying out* is affixed to a feminine singular suffix, something which is rarely translated. The Hebrew word *city* is a feminine word (it also means *daughter*). So, the cry that is coming to God—that cry comes from Sodom. We might render this *its crying out*. However, the verb which follows is plural in number, so we are speaking of something which a number of people have done. The picture is, a lone cry—even a cry of helplessness—which comes up to God, and a number of people who have done something, probably to cause this cry to come up to God.

Then we have a problem. There are two words that are spelled alike, and one is a feminine singular noun and the other is an adverb, and this explains the very different translations that we find at this point. I took this to be a feminine singular noun, to indicate that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah have manufactured their own destruction.

They have done is simply the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of *to do*. But what follows this is the adverb *kâlâh* (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAW*], which means, *completion, complete destruction, consumption, annihilation*. As an adverb, it means *completely, altogether*. Strong's #3617 BDB #478. What they have done has come to a point of completion; a point at which annihilation is the function of justice on this people.

I have translated it in this way: ...then I ought to go down now and see whether, according to her crying out—the [crying out] coming to Me, **they have manufactured complete destruction;**... However, most translators take those final few words, take the alternate translation of the final word, and then move them completely: **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." (NASB) Or, ...I will go down now and see whether **they have done altogether** according to the cry of it, which has come to Me. And if not, I will know. (The Heritage Bible⁴⁰) The phrase in question is bolded. So, the alternate rendering would be: ...then I will go down and see whether they have done all according to the crying out [which is] coming to Me.

In other words, there is a lot going on in this verse.

Genesis 18:21c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîm (אם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
The particle ʾîm (אם) can be used as a demonstrative (<i>lo, behold</i>), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (<i>if, though</i>); an indication of a wish or desire (<i>oh that, if only</i> ; this is a rare usage).			
lôʾ (לא or לוּל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâdaʿ (יָדַעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHḤ</i>]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect with the voluntative hê	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
The voluntative hê; that is, it ends with <i>âh</i> , not to indicate a feminine ending (although the meaning is similar), but this indicates that with the verb in the 1 st person, we should have the additional words <i>let me, allow me to</i> . The 1 st person Niphal may require the additional word <i>may, might, ought, should</i> . In the second person, we should have the additional word <i>might</i> ; or, in any person we might add the word <i>may, might</i> . Surprisingly enough, I have found nothing concerning the voluntative hê in any of my reference books (Gibson, Mansoor, Zodhiates or Kelley), but Owen points it out again and again, and the many translators of Scripture go along with this. This appears to be tacked onto imperatives to smooth them out and to recognize the volition of the person being spoken to.			

Translation: ...and, if not, I should know."

⁴⁰ A translation which is no longer available.

God is omniscient; He does not need to find out how degenerate Sodom and Gomorrah are; He knew that in eternity past.

God is omniscient—He knows everything—and He is omnipresent—he is everywhere—so he does not have to actually travel to Sodom and Gomorrah to check it out. He knows full well what is going on there. However, God is in a manifested form—He appears as a man—and He is with two angels, who also appear as men. The angels will probably partake in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. There are certainly millions of angels there observing what is taking place as well. By God going there, he is directing the attention of angelic creation to Sodom and what happens when certain sins are allowed to continue on a natural path.

The Emphasized Bible translates the last phrase as *And if not, I must know!* Further, this is an anthropathism—the ascribing to God human thoughts or emotions which He does not possess so that we may have a better understanding of God's actions and motivations.

Genesis 18:21 ...then I ought to go down now and see whether, according to her crying out—the [crying out] coming to Me, they have manufactured complete destruction [or, ...then I will go down and see whether they have done all according to the crying out [which is] coming to Me;...]; and, if not, I should know.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:21 ...then I ought to go down now to see whether they have manufactured a complete destruction, as is Sodom's crying out which has come to Me. If not, then I should know that as well.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Vv. 20–21 read: Then Y^ehowah said, “Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very weighty, then I ought to go down now and see whether, according to her crying out—the [crying out] coming to Me, they have manufactured complete destruction [or, ...then I will go down and see whether they have done all according to the crying out [which is] coming to Me;...]; and, if not, I should know.”

The actual translation of this verse is quite cumbersome, but what it says is relatively easy to understand. The outcry is the shrieking of their degeneracy which has ascended all the way to heaven. In this theophany, Jesus Christ will go to Sodom and Gomorrah and it will be shown to the angels the extent of the degeneracy of the men of Sodom. God will observe as a Theophany whether the outcry actually corresponds fully with the actions of the Sodomites.

One of the things which has to be made clear in the Angelic Conflict: there are types of sins that, when they are allowed free reign—when they function without any controls—these sins will destroy the innocent and these sins destroy the society where they are committed. Many sins will not allow for the freedom of others. Muslims, for instance, when they begin to exceed 50% of a population will not allow Christians or Jews to coexist with them. It may happen all at once and sometimes it takes awhile for this to take place—but, as we have seen happen in Egypt as of late,⁴¹ Muslims will destroy the churches and the homes of Christians and they will kill the Christians in many cases. Although there are some Jews in Muslim countries, in many cases, they must hide their Jewish heritage or they will be destroyed. Palestinians routinely fire rockets into Israel—hundreds and thousands, every year—and they do not care what the end result is.

Application: In the United States, the whole gay agenda is just beginning. People who express a different opinion—that homosexual actions are sinful or that homosexuals are going to hell (as per 1Corinthians 6:9). Now, quite obviously, when a homosexual believes in Jesus Christ, they are eternally saved, just like anyone else. However, today, a person quoting that verse or saying something similar to that are attacked as hateful; and some

⁴¹ I write this in 2012.

are trying to make it impossible for people to say such things aloud. Like any other movement against Christianity (and make no mistake about it, the gay agenda is in complete opposition to Christianity), it will not stop. No matter what gains it makes, it will continue to go further. You cannot think to give up and allow for some sort of homosexual union or to allow for gay marriage is the end of their movement. It will not stop there. That is their legal foothold to take this further. The end result is to censor the Bible in anyway possible; to censor pastors; to censor writers or speakers. After that will be legal prosecution against these, whether civilly or criminally (there are homosexuals taking Christians to court all over the world right now).

Vv. 20–21 read: Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very weighty, then I ought to go down now and see whether, according to her crying out—the [crying out] coming to Me, they have manufactured complete destruction [or, ...*then I will go down and see whether they have done all according to the crying out [which is] coming to Me;...*]; and, if not, I should know." God has a multiplicity of purposes for what He is saying. He will want Abraham to engage in order to teach us some principles thousands of years later. God wants the angels to observe all that is going on and to be able to come to a clear conclusion that these men of Sodom cannot be allowed to continue.

This is interesting. It appears as if God is receiving prayers and calls from Sodom and Gomorrah, but that He has to go see for Himself. What this appears to be is a human function which has been applied to God in order to better explain His actions.

What the Revealed Member of the Trinity will do is, focus the attention of the angels, both fallen and elect, upon this part of the world, how their sin has become a great weight to this people. God has laid out a clear precedent with Adam and Eve; and yet this precedent is rejected in Sodom and Gomorrah.

God is omniscient and He knows all that is going on there. However, we live 3000 years later and we need to understand what is so great and weighty as to cause God to come down to this area and to execute divine justice against it. God will show that you cannot simply allow a population to go down this road of degeneracy without correcting them; which will eventually mean, in this case, their full and complete destruction, executed by divine judgement.

What is missing from most translations is, the first verb has a voluntative *hê* at the end of the verb and is followed by the particle of entreaty *nâ'*. So, the Hebrew can be translated "Let Me go down, if you would, to see..." The particle of entreaty may also be translated *now*, giving us, "Let Me go down now to see..." I work with about 50 English translations of the Bible, and none of them take the voluntative *hê* into consideration; and fewer than half of them have the translation *now*.

This suggests that God is speaking to Abraham now, as much as He is speaking to the angels.

This gives us:

Gen 18:20–21 Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, let Me go down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know."

Again, God is omniscient; He knows exactly what is occurring in Sodom and Gomorrah. He does not have to go there to find out about the cries which were made to Him. However, God is directing the attention of the angels, both elect and fallen, to this part of the world. He is going to make it clear to them the kind of sins and the kind of destruction which is occurring in these cities. Angels are not omniscient. The world is huge and they do not

individually know everything that goes on. So, when an important event like this occurs, where God's judgment is demanded, God wants them all to pay attention.

I have mentioned that this great sin is homosexual rape, which has become the social life of these cities.

What is being illustrated here (or, actually, when they get to Sodom and Gomorrah) is just how far their sin has taken them. They have become roving bands of homosexual addicts, desirous of other men; and they will rape new men that they find attractive. I realize that this may be difficult to grasp or to relate to. Some men can understand this in terms of women, that they would, like Solomon, want to have a different woman every night. However, men do not get this sort of thing because women are so dramatically different from us. A man is generally not going to find a new willing woman every night that he can then discard when the night is over.

So, what has happened is, the homosexual men in Sodom and Gomorrah are completely out of control and they are led by their sexual lusts. Most people are more familiar with a drug addict in the family or a former friend who has turned to drugs. They undergo a personality change in their addiction, and their lives become more and more centered on the acquiring of this drug—even if it is just marijuana—and using the drug. In the case of marijuana, their criminal activity might be limited. In the case of harder drugs, they may be willing to steal from friends and family members in order to obtain their drugs. For those who have had a family member or a friend like this, there comes a point that you just write them off, put them out of your life, and make them feel as unwelcome as is humanly possible. Their addiction has become so pervasive in their lives that they will do anything to satisfy their craving. Now, if you can understand this, then homosexual acts are very similar in their nature. Not every addiction makes you go out and rob and steal in order to feed that addiction; but some men will rape in order to feed their sexual addiction. So, the roving bands of homosexual rapists in Sodom and Gomorrah—men who are addicted to homosexual activity—made these cities dangers to be in or near.

Thrown into this mix is the sense of power of one man over another; and killer lust as well. Again, if you think that this is far-fetched, simply imagine an all-male prison where all controls are relaxed, and homosexual acts are completely ignored, including homosexual rape. This is Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's time.

I continue to get ahead of myself, in knowing what is coming up in Genesis 19, but the reasonable question is, you have all of these homosexual men—why can't they simply have sex with one another? And again, this is related to the psyche of men (not just homosexual men, but all men) and their preponderance towards multiple sex partners that they can discard afterwards. One of the things that many people have a difficult time grasping is, a male homosexual at age 40 might have had 500, 1000 or even 2000 sex partners. This is not way out there. And we hear so much about homosexual marriage, but one of the key features of a heterosexual marriage—fidelity—does not exist in a long-term homosexual relationship.

There is something missing in a homosexual "marriage" virginity and fidelity. That is because both partners would be male. There is no such thing as a homosexual marriage between two virgins. It cannot occur. This is because homosexual acts are behavioral deviations. When I was younger, marriage between two virgins was common; I don't know the exact percentages, but in 1950's American, I would guess 50%. Perhaps higher if you have a couple who perhaps engaged in premarital sex, but have had sex with no one else. Today, a marriage between virgins is much less common, but it still exists. Know that Satan will try to break down marriage in any way possible. So he will attack marriage with adultery, promiscuity, premarital sex, and divorce; and he will attack marriage from the homosexual angle as well. Notice how much of the disintegration of marriage has fed the arguments of the gay agenda? "Half of heterosexual marriages end in divorce." "No such things as virgins getting married any more." So you see—attacks against God's plan will come from all directions.

So far, we have studied the first 6 verses of the second half of Genesis 18:

Genesis 18:16–21 And the men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham was going with them to bring them on the way. And Jehovah said, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, And Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the persons of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., *his descendants*] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [*guarded, protected, preserved*] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers of that era] to do righteousness [the principle of God's integrity] and justice [the function of God's integrity], to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him." Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, let Me go down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know."

Abraham has enjoyed fellowship with God and two angels, and God has called attention to these angels (and all other angels as well) to Abraham and the future of his seed. However, God has come to deal with Sodom and Gomorrah. It is almost as if, Sodom and Gomorrah was a dreadful situation that God had to deal with, and that God took the time to enjoy fellowship with Abraham, which would involve Abraham's thoughts on this judgment.

What is occurring in these cities is all the men will descend upon any traveler and strangers would be raped and often killed. There was unbridled homosexual lust, power lust and killer lust in this particular area.

And so turn from there the men and so they walk Sodom-ward. And Abraham his yet stands to faces of Y^ehowah.

Genesis
18:22

So the men turned from there and walked toward Sodom. Yet Abraham stood before Y^ehowah.

So the men turned from there and began walking toward Sodom. However, Abraham stood in front of Jehovah.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the angels <u>who had the likeness of men</u> , turned thence and went towards Sedom. And Abraham <u>now supplicated mercy for Lot, and ministered in prayer</u> before the Lord.
Latin Vulgate	And they turned themselves from thence, and went their way to Sodom: but Abraham as yet stood before the Lord.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so turn from there the men and so they walk Sodom-ward. And Abraham his yet stands to faces of Y ^e howah.
Peshitta (Syriac)	So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the men, having departed from there, came to Sodom; and the Lord stood before Abraham.

Significant differences: The targum, as usual, has a great deal more text.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. The men turned and started toward Sodom. But the LORD stayed with Abraham,...

Easy-to-Read Version	So the men turned and started walking toward Sodom. But Abraham stood there before the Lord.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then the two men left and went on toward Sodom, but the LORD remained with Abraham.
<i>The Message</i>	The men set out for Sodom, but Abraham stood in GOD's path, blocking his way.
New Life Bible	Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom. But Abraham still stood before the Lord.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then the men departed for Sodom, but AbraHam was still there in the Lord's presence.
Ancient Roots Translinear <i>God's Word™</i>	The men there faced and went to Sodom, but Abraham still stood to Yahweh's face. From there the men turned and went on toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing in front of the LORD.
New American Bible	As the men turned and walked on toward Sodom, Abraham remained standing before the LORD.
New Jerusalem Bible	While the men left there and went to Sodom, Yahweh remained in Abraham's presence.
New Simplified Bible	The men left there and went toward Sodom. Abraham still stood before Jehovah.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And the men, turning from that place, went on to Sodom: but Abraham was still waiting before the Lord.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	So the men turned from there, and went towards Sodom; but Abraham stood firm in the presence of the LORD.
NET Bible®	The two men turned [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.] and headed [Heb "went."] toward Sodom, but Abraham was still standing before the LORD [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.].
NIV, ©2011	The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD [Masoretic Text; an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition <i>but the LORD remained standing before Abraham</i>].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And facing thence are the mortals, and they are going to Sodom. And Yahweh still is standing before Abraham.
English Revised Version	So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.
exeGesés companion Bible	...-and the men turn their faces from there and go toward Sedom:

and Abraham stands still at the face of Yah Veh.

ABRAHAM INTERCEDES WITH YAH VEH .

Heritage Bible

And the men turned their faces away from there, and walked toward Sodom; and Abraham was still standing before the face of Jehovah..

Modern KJV

And the men turned their faces away from there, and went toward Sodom. But Abraham still stood before Jehovah.

New RSV

So the men turned from there, and went towards Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord [Another ancient tradition reads *while the Lord remained standing before Abraham*].

Syndein

And the {two} men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom. Abraham stood yet before Jehovah/God. {Note: Obviously at this point, Abraham has determined that this is the Lord in front of him now.}

Updated Bible Version 2.11

And the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before Yahweh.

Young's Literal Translation

And the men faced around from there and went toward Sodom. And Abraham was still standing before Jehovah.

The gist of this verse:

The angels began to walk toward Sodom, but Abraham stands before Jehovah.

Genesis 18:22a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pânâh (פָּנָה) [pronounced paw-NAWH]	to turn, to turn away from, to turn toward, to turn one's face away from, to turn one's face to	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6437 BDB #815
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
'ănâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-seem]	mortals, mortal men, mankind; fallen men, depraved men, feeble men [liable to disease and calamity]; peons, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35

When this word is used for man, the emphasis is either a reference to man in his fallen state (the emphasis does not have to be upon sin; it can be upon man's fragility and mortal nature) or upon the lower classes of man, *the peons, peasants, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble*.

Translation: So the men turned from there...

Possibly, it is more accurate to say that *they turned away from* where they were, with Abraham. God has just spoken of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which they have brought upon themselves, and Abraham has heard this. In fact, it appears that God was speaking to Abraham when He said, “[Let Me go now.](#)”

Genesis 18:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Sedum (שְׂדֹמ) [pronounced <i>seh-d-OHM</i>]	<i>burning; which is transliterated Sodom</i>	masculine singular locative noun with the directional hê	Strong's #5467 BDB #690

This word, after a verb of motion, has the locale *âh* (ה) ending. This is called the *directive hê* or the *he locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

Translation: ...and walked toward Sodom.

And the men—two angels and God in mortal bodies (or, what appears to be mortal bodies)—begin their trek toward Sodom. Abraham knows that Lot lives there with his family and he becomes quite concerned.

God knew about Lot and his family in Sodom and so did Abraham. God was waiting for Abraham to intercede on behalf of Lot. Abraham does not reveal his entire hand at first; even though God knows from eternity past how Abraham's argument will proceed. But Abraham does understand a certain amount about the salt principle and that God preserves nations and cities because the some of the inhabitants being believers.

Genesis 18:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרָאָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Genesis 18:22c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʿōwd (וּדַע) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb with a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
This is the infinitive absolute of the verb <i>to go over again, to repeat</i> .			
ʿamad (עָמַד) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAHD</i>]	<i>is taking a stand, is standing [nearby], stands; enduring; is remaining</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5975 BDB #763
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> . This can also mean <i>forwards; the front part</i> [or, the edge of a sword]. L ^o pânîym (לפָּנֵי) can take on a temporal sense as well: <i>before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times</i> .			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: Yet Abraham stood before Y^ehowah.

This is a very difficult phrase to give a nice smooth but accurate translation, because of the 3rd person masculine singular suffix affixed to the adverb (something we do not tend to do). Although I have used the adverb *yet*, it appears that Abraham repeatedly stands before God, speaking to Him and discussing this situation with Him. More literally, this reads **And Abraham his repeatedly standing in front of Jehovah**. It is not difficult to understand; but it is difficult to give a nice smooth translation for this phrase.

In a misguided spirit of reverence, the original text in v. 22 was altered slightly to read *But Abraham stood yet before the Lord*. This is one of the 18 emendations of the Sopherim.⁴² In the margins of standard Hebrew Codices we have writing (called the Massorah) which pertains to the passage at hand. This is not a running commentary, but contains information helpful in understanding the text or the variant readings. In this situation, there were roughly 18 passages which were changed before the time of Christ because they somehow seemed irreverent. It seemed better to the copyist if he wrote that Abraham stood before Yahweh, rather than the other way around. So it is possible that this reads, **Yet Y^ehowah stood before Abraham**.

⁴² See *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 1017–1022. This is found online [here](#).

There appears to be no little disagreement about this emendation thing. One reference⁴³ lists 134 emendations; Bullinger lists 18 of them. Apparently the 134 emendations is all about changing *Y^ehowah* to *Adonai*. There are also those who question them and suggest maybe this is not really how the text ought to read. One person wrote: *It seems the whole basic emendations theory is unproven and conjectural, and yet a lot of times it is accepted on reference momentum only.*⁴⁴ Bear in mind that this is the opinion of someone who is clearly a student of the Old Testament, but I have no idea as to his level of expertise. On the other hand, Bullinger is a well-respect author. In any case, we are really only speaking of 18 or so passages where there is a question.

My problem in this particular case is, I am not concerned about the possibly irreverence which is perceived; I am more concerned that Abraham standing before God seems more apropos to the context here. God appears to be going with the angels to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham stands in front of Him, and voices his objection.

This is what God was waiting for. God knows that Lot is there in the Sodom and Gomorrah area, as does Abraham. Now Abraham wants to figure out how to deal with this. He needs to find out from God at what point will God protect the innocent (the righteous—those who have believed in Him) and at what point will He back off on destroying an entire city. How many believers are in a specific geographical area affects how God deals with the geographical area. That is what the next several verses are all about.

*McGee: Abraham didn't have a front gate, so he walked out with them a little farther than the front gate to bid them goodbye. And as they walked out from where Abraham lived, they could look down to Sodom and Gomorrah. When I was in that land, it was amazing to me how far you could see on a clear day. I could see from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. And from the ruins of old Samaria, I could see Jerusalem, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Sea of Galilee. I could see Mt. Hermon from most anyplace - it's tremendous. Abraham walked out a ways with these guests, and down below there, they saw Sodom and Gomorrah. They were the great resorts of that day, and they must have been very delightful and beautiful places to be.*⁴⁵

Genesis 18:22 **So the men turned from there and walked toward Sodom. Yet Abraham stood before Y^ehowah.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:22 **So the men turned from there and began walking toward Sodom. However, Abraham stood in front of Jehovah.** (Kukis paraphrase)

And so draws near Abraham and so he says, "Will in fact You scrape away a righteous [man] with a malevolent [man]?"

Genesis
18:23

Then Abraham drew near and he said, "Will You, in fact, destroy a righteous man with a malevolent man?"

Then Abraham approached God, saying, "Will You, in fact, destroy a righteous man while destroying one who is malevolent?"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

⁴³ Although this [source](#) was at the top of the google search, I got a page load error.

⁴⁴ From iBible.org, accessed January 3, 2014.

⁴⁵ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed January 2, 2014.

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham prayed and said, Will You destroy in Your displeasure the innocent with the guilty?
Latin Vulgate	And drawing near, he said: Will You destroy the just with the wicked?
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so draws near Abraham and so he says, "Will in fact You scrape away a righteous [man] with a malevolent [man]?"
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham drew near and said, Will You in Your anger destroy the righteous with the sinners?
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham drew near and said, Would You destroy the righteous with the wicked, <u>and shall the righteous be as the wicked?</u>

Significant differences: The Greek adds an additional phrase at the end.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham approached and said, "Will you really sweep away the innocent [Or righteous] with the guilty [Or wicked]?"
Contemporary English V.	...who asked, "LORD, when you destroy the evil people, are you also going to destroy those who are good?"
Easy English	Then Abraham came near to the *Lord. And Abraham said, 'I do not believe that you would kill good people as well as wicked people.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Abraham approached the Lord and asked, "Lord, do you plan to destroy the good people while you are destroying the evil people?"
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham approached the LORD and asked, "Are you really going to destroy the innocent with the guilty?"
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham confronted him, "Are you serious? Are you planning on getting rid of the good people right along with the bad?"
New Berkeley Version	Abraham came closer and said, "Wilt Thou wipe out the good too, with the bad?"
New Century Version	Then Abraham approached him and asked, "Do you plan to destroy the good people along with the evil ones?"
New Life Bible	Abraham came near and said, "Will You destroy the good also, with the bad?"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So AbraHam went up to him and asked, 'Are you going to destroy the righteous along with the wicked, treating the righteous as though they were wicked?'
Christian Community Bible <i>God's Word™</i>	Abraham went forward and said, "Will you really let the just perish with the wicked? Abraham came closer and asked, "Are you really going to sweep away the innocent with the guilty?"
NIRV	Then Abraham came up to him. He said, "Will you sweep away godly people along with those who are evil?"
New Jerusalem Bible	Abraham stepped forward and said, 'Will you really destroy the upright with the guilty?'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Abraham came near, and said, Will you let destruction come on the upright with the sinners?
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Complete Jewish Bible	Avraham approached and said, "Will you actually sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and Abraham approached and said, "Will You destroy the just along with the wicked?"
HCSB	Abraham stepped forward and said, "Will You really sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"
Judaica Press Complete T.	And Abraham approached and said, "Will You even destroy the righteous with the wicked?"
NET Bible®	Abraham approached and said, "Will you sweep away the godly along with the wicked?"
NIV – UK	Then Abraham approached him and said: Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Abraham drew near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wrong?"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And Abraham came close and said, Will You destroy the righteous (those upright and in right standing with God) together with the wicked?
Concordant Literal Version	And close is Abraham coming and saying, "Indeed, sweeping up are You the righteous with the wicked? So become the righteous as the wicked.
Context Group Version	And Abraham drew near, and said, Will you consume the vindicated with the wicked?
English Revised Version	Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"
exeGesés companion Bible	And Abraham draws near and says, is it so that you scrape away the just with the wicked?
LTHB	And Abraham drew near and said, Is it so? Will You cut off the righteous with the wicked?
Modern KJV	And Abraham drew near and said, Will You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?
New King James Version	And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"
Syndein	{Abraham the Prayer Warrior Making Intercessory Prayer on Behalf of Sodom} And Abraham drew near, and said, "Will You also destroy the righteous {tsaddiyq - believers with imputed divine righteousness} with the wicked {rasha`}?"
A Voice in the Wilderness	And Abraham approached and said, Would You also sweep away the righteous with the wicked?
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham draws near and says, "Will You also consume righteous with wicked?"

The gist of this verse: Abraham asks God if He will destroy the believers with the degenerate unbelievers.

Genesis 18:23a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i>]	<i>to come near, to draw near, to approach, to come hither</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְאָהִם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: Then Abraham drew near...

This is the second time that Abraham will speak to God, and, in essence, He is praying to God. We may think of it differently because God is manifested before him, but there is no difference beyond that.

The verb used here is related both to prayer (Exodus 19:22 Deut. 21:5) and to animal sacrifices (Exodus 32:6 Leviticus 8:15).

Genesis 18:23b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i>		Strong's #none BDB #209
'aph (אֵף) [pronounced <i>ahf</i>]	<i>in fact, furthermore, also, yea, even, indeed; even though</i>	a conjunction which signifies <i>addition</i> or <i>emphasis</i>	Strong's #637 BDB #64

This word appears to have two different purposes: (1) A surprise is then mentioned or the unexpected is said. (2) A reference is made to a preceding sentence and it is expanded or emphasized and we would translate this word *yea, à fortiori, the more so, how much more* (following an affirmative clause), *how much less* (following a negative clause), *furthermore, in fact*.

Genesis 18:23b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
çâphâh (שָׁפַח) [pronounced saw- PHAWH]	<i>to scrape, to scrape together, to scrape off; to take away, to sweep away; to destroy; to be destroyed, to perish (intransitive meanings); to add, to augment, to increase</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5595 BDB #705
tsaddîyq (צַדִּיק) [pronounced tsahd- DEEK]	<i>just, righteous, justified, vindicated; absolute or perfect righteousness [if applied to God]</i>	adjective, often used as a substantive	Strong's #6662 BDB #843
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
râshâ‘ (רָשָׁע) [pronounced raw- SHAWÇ]	<i>malevolent, lawless, corrupt, criminal</i>	masculine singular adjective; can act like a substantive	Strong's #7563 BDB #957

Translation: ...and he said, “Will You, in fact, destroy a righteous man with a malevolent man?”

Abraham is thinking and he knows that Lot is there, so he asks a reasonable question: there is a righteous man standing right next to a lawless criminal; does God just wipe both of these men out together? Does this make any sense? Despite all that is going on in Sodom, Abraham asks a reasonable question of God. How does it make sense for the God of the Universe to destroy the righteous with the wicked?

So that there is no confusion, recall that righteousness is associated with faith in Y^ehowah Elohim (Genesis 15:6).

McGee: What is the first thing that enters Abraham's mind? The first thing that enters his mind, of course, is Lot. He had rescued Lot once, and now Lot is again in danger down there. I think that Abraham had wondered many times about Lot and his relationship to God, but at least he believes that Lot is a saved man. He is asking God, "What about the righteous?" I believe that Abraham would have told you that he thought there were many people in the city of Sodom who were saved. He could not understand why God would destroy the righteous with the wicked.⁴⁶

These angels cannot act apart from God—so, if Abraham stands in front of God, preventing Him from going to Sodom, this temporarily stops the judgment against Sodom.

Abraham is going to be quite bold throughout the rest of this chapter. He speaks directly to God and asks, “Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” Recall that, Abraham and Lot are both righteous because God has imputed righteousness to them because they believed Jehovah God (Genesis 15:6 2Peter 2:7). Today, we are positionally righteous, because we have faith in God’s Son (the same Person).

⁴⁶ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed January 2, 2014.

The verb here is a Qal imperfect of *to sweep away, to snatch away, to take away*. Other stems of the verb indicate *destruction, annihilation*. Abraham is using this verb in its tamest sense, almost euphemistically.

Abraham is making the point—probably not knowing the extent of the degeneracy of Sodom and Gomorrah—that there are righteous and unrighteous people living side-by-side there. He is asking, does it makes sense for God to bring down the same judgment upon all these people, righteous and unrighteous alike?

Genesis 18:23 Then Abraham drew near and he said, “Will You, in fact, destroy a righteous man with a malevolent man? (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:23 Then Abraham approached God, saying, “Will You, in fact, destroy a righteous man while destroying one who is malevolent? (Kukis paraphrase)

Essentially, Abraham is suggesting, suppose there is a righteous man standing next to a reprobate; do you simply destroy them both? Now, this either stopped God from walking, or he gave Abraham His attention. Abraham continues in v. 24 below:

Suppose there [are] fifty righteous ones in a midst of the city—will in fact You scrape away and not bear up for the place for the sake of fifty righteous ones who are in her midst?

Genesis
18:24

Suppose there [are] 50 righteous ones in the midst of the city—will You, in fact, destroy and not sustain the place for the sake of 50 righteous ones who are in its midst?

Suppose for a moment that there are 50 believers in this city—would You indeed destroy this city and not, instead, bear up this place because there are 50 righteous people who live there?

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	Perhaps there are fifty innocent persons within the city, <u>who pray before You,--ten for every city, of all the five cities of Sedom, Amarah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar.</u> Will You in Your displeasure destroy and not forgive the country, on account of the fifty innocent ones who are in it?
Latin Vulgate	If there be fifty just men in the city, will they perish withal? And will You not spare that place for the sake of the fifty just, if they be therein?
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Suppose there [are] fifty righteous ones in a midst of the city—will in fact You scrape away and not bear up for the place for the sake of fifty righteous ones who are in her midst?
Peshitta (Syriac)	Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You in Your anger destroy it, and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous that are in it?
Septuagint (Greek)	Should there be fifty righteous in the city, will You destroy them? Will You not spare the whole place for the sake of the fifty righteous, if they be in it?
Significant differences:	There is additional text in the targum. All of the ancient versions are quite similar to the Hebrew.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	What if there are fifty innocent people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not save the place for the sake of the fifty innocent people in it?
Contemporary English V. Easy English	Wouldn't you spare the city if there are only fifty good people in it? If there are 50 good people in the city, will you destroy it? Or will you save it because of those 50 people?
Easy-to-Read Version	What if there are 50 good people in that city? Will you still destroy the city? Surely you will save the city for the 50 good people living there.
Good News Bible (TEV)	If there are fifty innocent people in the city, will you destroy the whole city? Won't you spare it in order to save the fifty?
<i>The Message</i>	What if there are fifty decent people left in the city; will you lump the good with the bad and get rid of the lot?
New Berkeley Version	There are perhaps fifty good persons in the city; wilt Thou indeed wipe out and not pardon the community because of the fifty good people among them?
New Century Version	What if there are fifty good people in that city? Will you still destroy it? Surely you will save the city for the fifty good people living there.
New Life Bible	What if there are fifty good people within the city? Will You destroy the place and not save it because of the fifty good people in it?

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Why, if there are fifty righteous [people] in the city, will you destroy them? Wouldn't you spare the whole place if there were fifty righteous [people] there?
Ancient Roots Translinear	Perhaps fifty righteous exist amidst the city. Therefore, will you even consume its center and not lift the place for the fifty righteous?
Beck's American Translation	What if there are fifty good people in the town? Will You wipe them out? Won't You forgive the place for the fifty good people who are there?
Christian Community Bible	Perhaps there are fifty good people in the town. Are you really going to let them perish? Would you not spare the place for the sake of these fifty righteous people?
<i>God's Word</i> TM	What if there are 50 innocent people in the city? Are you really going to sweep them away? Won't you spare that place for the sake of the 50 innocent people who are in it?
NIRV	What if there are 50 godly people in the city? Will you really sweep it away? Won't you spare the place because of the 50 godly people in it?
New Jerusalem Bible	Suppose there are fifty upright people in the city. Will you really destroy it? Will you not spare the place for the sake of the fifty upright in it?
Revised English Bible	Suppose there are fifty innocent in the city; will you really sweep it away, and not pardon the place because of the fifty innocent there?

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	If by chance there are fifty upright men in the town, will you give the place to destruction and not have mercy on it because of the fifty upright men?
Ferar-Fenton Bible	If there are fifty just persons within the city, will You destroy it, and not raise Your hand from the place, because of the fifty just persons that are within it?
HCSB	What if there are 50 righteous people in the city? Will You really sweep it away instead of sparing the place for the sake of the 50 righteous people who are in it?
Judaica Press Complete T.	Perhaps there are fifty righteous men in the midst of the city; will You even destroy and not forgive the place for the sake of the fifty righteous men who are in its midst?

New Advent Bible If there be fifty just men in the city, shall they perish withal? And will you not spare that place for the sake of the fifty just, if they be therein.

NET Bible® What if there are fifty godly people in the city? Will you really wipe it out and not spare [Heb "lift up," perhaps in the sense of "bear with" (cf. NRSV "forgive").] the place for the sake of the fifty godly people who are in it?

NIV, ©2011 What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare [Or forgive; also in verse 26] the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it?

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version Perhaps, forsooth, fifty righteous are there in the midst of the city. Indeed, sweeping them up are You and not bearing with the entire place on account of the fifty righteous who are within it?

Context Group Version Perhaps there are fifty vindicated inside the city: will you consume and not spare the place for the fifty vindicated that are in it?

English Revised Version Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?

Modern KJV Perhaps there are fifty righteous within the city. Will You also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are in it?

NASB Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare [Or forgive] the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?

Webster's Bible Translation Peradventure there are fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that [are] in it?

World English Bible What if there are fifty righteous within the city? Will you consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are therein?

Young's Updated LT Perhaps there are fifty righteous in the midst of the city; will You also consume, and not bear with the place for the sake of the fifty—the righteous who are in its midst?

The gist of this verse: Abraham first asks, what if there are fifty believers in the Sodom and Gomorrah area; will you still wipe that area out?

Genesis 18:24a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾûwlay (אולי) [pronounced oo-LAHY]	<i>perhaps, unless, suppose; if peradventure</i>	adverb/conjunction	Strong's #194 BDB #19
yêsh (יש) [pronounced yaysh]	<i>being, substance, existence; used as a substitute for to be (without reference to number or tense); there [is, are]; to be present, to be ready, to exist</i>	substantive	Strong's #3426 BDB #441
chămishîym (חמשים) [pronounced khuh-mih-SHEEM]	<i>fifty</i>	plural numeral	Strong's #2572 BDB #332

Genesis 18:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
tsaddîyqîym (צַדִּיקִים) [pronounced tsahd-dee-KEEM]	<i>just ones, righteous ones, justified ones; [those who have been] vindicated</i>	masculine plural adjective, often used as a substantive	Strong's #6662 BDB #843
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
tâvek ^e (תַּוְכַּי) [pronounced taw-VEK ^e]	<i>midst, among, middle</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8432 BDB #1063
With the bêyth preposition, tâvek ^e can mean <i>in the middle of, in the midst of; into, among</i> . In the Hebrew, this is spelled תוֹכָבִי. With the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix, it can mean <i>in your midst, among you</i> . with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix, it can mean <i>in their midst, among them</i> .			
ġyr (עִיר) [pronounced ġeer]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

Translation: Suppose there [are] 50 righteous ones in the midst of the city—...

At this point, Abraham begins to put some numbers to this situation. He asks God to suppose that there are 50 righteous men in this city (that is, believers in Jesus Christ of any gender).

Genesis 18:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hă (ה) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i>		Strong's #none BDB #209
'aph (אֵף) [pronounced ahf]	<i>in fact, furthermore, also, yea, even, indeed; even though</i>	a conjunction which signifies <i>addition</i> or <i>emphasis</i>	Strong's #637 BDB #64

This word appears to have two different purposes: (1) A surprise is then mentioned or the unexpected is said. (2) A reference is made to a preceding sentence and it is expanded or emphasized and we would translate this word *yea, à fortiori, the more so, how much more* (following an affirmative clause), *how much less* (following a negative clause), *furthermore, in fact*.

Genesis 18:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
çâphâh (שָׁפַח) [pronounced saw- PHAWH]	<i>to scrape, to scrape together, to scrape off; to take away, to sweep away; to destroy; to be destroyed, to perish</i> (intransitive meanings); <i>to add, to augment, to increase</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5595 BDB #705

Translation: ...will You, in fact, destroy...

Would You actually destroy them? Would you really sweep away this city? Abraham is certain of the answer that he will receive. He is sure that God will not destroy this city if there are 50 believers in it.

At this point, let me remind you of the 3 stages of sanctification. At salvation, we are positionally sanctified. We receive God's righteousness and we are eternally saved. Now, in time, ideally speaking, we will reach the first stage of spiritual maturity; that is experiential sanctification or experiential righteousness (in the Old Testament, this is often referred to as *fearing the Lord*). Now, Abraham is not distinguishing between those who are believers with God's righteousness and those who are believers who have attained some semblance of spiritual maturity. So, for this reason, we are going to assume that we are simply speaking of 50 men and women who have believed in Him; and Abraham is certain that God would not destroy Sodom if there are 50 believers there.

Genesis 18:24c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâsâ' (נָשָׂא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669

Nâsâ' actually has a variety of Qal meanings: It means ❶ *to take up, to lift up, to bear up*; ❷ *to lift up someone's head* (this is used in a favorable way; i.e., it is misused to mean *to make one cheerful or merry*; ❸ *to lift up one's own countenance, i.e., to be cheerful, full of confidence*, ❹ *to bear, to carry*, ❺ *to lift up in a balance, i.e., to weigh carefully*; ❻ *to bear one's sin or punishment*, ❼ *to lift up the voice* (this can be used in the sense of bemoaning, crying, crying out, rejoicing, *to lift up any with the voice* (a song, an instrument); ❽ *to lift up the soul* (i.e., *to wish for, to desire*); ❾ *to have the heart lifted up* (i.e., they are ready and willing to do something; ❿ *to bear one's sin* (in such a way to expiate the sin, to make atonement for the sin, to pardon the sin). This list does not exhaust the various connotations for nâsâ'. BDB adds the following: *to support, to sustain, to endure; to take, to take away, to carry off, to forgive*.

Genesis 18:24c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâqôwm (מוֹקֵם) [pronounced maw-KOHM]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
l ^e ma'an (לְעִמָּן) [pronounced l ^e -MAH-ğahn]	<i>for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, to the intent that, to the purpose that, in order that, in view of, to the end that; so that</i>	compound preposition and substantive which acts like a preposition	Strong's #4616 BDB #775
This is the substantive ma'an (עִמָּן) [pronounced MAH-ğahn], which means <i>purpose, intent</i> , combined with the lâmed preposition (which is the only way that it is found in Scripture).			
chămishîym (חֲמִשִּׁימ) [pronounced khuh-mih-SHEEM]	<i>fifty</i>	plural numeral	Strong's #2572 BDB #332
tsaddîyqîym (צַדִּיקִים) [pronounced tsaht-dee-KEEM]	<i>just ones, righteous ones, justified ones; [those who have been] vindicated</i>	masculine plural adjective, often used as a substantive	Strong's #6662 BDB #843
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qereb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced KEH-re ^b v]	<i>midst, among, from among [a group of people]; an [actual, physical] inward part; the inner person with respect to thinking and emotion; as a faculty of thinking or emotion; heart, mind, inner being; entrails [of sacrificial animals]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7130 BDB #899
With the bēyth preposition, it means <i>in the midst of, among, into the midst of</i> (after a verb of motion).			

Translation: ...and not sustain the place for the sake of 50 righteous ones who are in its midst?

Abraham quickly throws in another verb, a verb which usually means *to bear, to carry, to lift*. This verb also has other uses, which are less common. It can mean for God *to bear up the sin of someone*; it can mean *to sustain, to uphold*. So Abraham asks, “Will You not sustain this place because of 50 believers who live there?” Abraham is certain that he has found a number which would insure the safety of this city.

This is a marvelous passage. Abraham is not exactly eliciting information; he is asking God a rhetorical question. Abraham is pointing out to God, God's Own character and supports the negative answer which he expects with the following verse.

Abraham has a method to his thinking here, which God knows, understands and indulges. Abraham sets up a hypothetical. God is going to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (and several others), so Abraham asks Him, “What is there are 50 born-again believers there; will you destroy that city, and not spare the believers there?”

Abraham was pretty certain, at the outset, that 50 believers within a city would preserve that city. He was also fairly certain that there were not 50 believers in Jehovah Elohim in Sodom. However, he wanted to start at a place where he felt confident.

Genesis 18:24 Suppose there [are] 50 righteous ones in the midst of the city—will You, in fact, destroy and not sustain the place for the sake of 50 righteous ones who are in its midst? (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:24 Suppose for a moment that there are 50 believers in this city—would You indeed destroy this city and not, instead, bear up this place because there are 50 righteous people who live there? (Kukis paraphrase)

Let's take this into the 1950's of the United States. Many people feared total nuclear annihilation of the United States by Russia. However, simultaneously, the United States was filled with believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1949, the evangelist Billy Graham held his first series of revival meetings in Los Angeles and thousands of people showed up every night. Because of the large number of people who responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ, God was not going to allow the annihilation of the United States. No one in that era had any reason to fear nuclear destruction because of what we are studying right now.

Even today, there are huge numbers of believers in the United States. An April 2012 [Rasmussen Reports survey](#) revealed that 86% of American adults believe the person known to history as Jesus Christ walked the Earth 2,000 years ago. 77% Believe Jesus rose from the dead. Romans 10:9 tells us: **If you profess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**

We in the United States have a moral duty to withstand evil throughout the world, whether it be communism or Islam. We can rest assured, because of this passage, that God will not allow the complete destruction of our country. This was true in the 1950's and it is true today. We do not have to ask God, “Suppose there are 50 righteous in our city; will you allow the righteous to be swept away with the wicked?” We know God's answer. Abraham knew that answer. He continues:

Far be it to You from doing as the word the this, to kill a just [one] with a guilty [one]. And was as the righteous as the guilty—far be it to You! Will the Judge of all the earth not do justice?”

Genesis
18:25

Far be it to You from doing such a thing, to kill a righteous [man] like a guilty [man]. That the righteous should be as the guilty—far be it to You! Will not the Judge of the whole earth render [lit., *construct*] a just decision?”

This is impossible for You to do such a thing, to kill a righteous man like a guilty person! That the righteous man should be treated just like the guilty—that is impossible for You! Shouldn't the Judge of the entire earth render a just verdict?"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	Unholy would it be before You to do according to this word, to slay the innocent with the guilty, and to make the innocent to be as the guilty! That be unholy with You. It cannot be that One who is the Judge of all the earth should not do justice.
Latin Vulgate	Far be it from you to do this thing, and to slay the just with the wicked, and for the just to be in like case as the wicked; this is not befitting you: you who judgest all the earth, will not make this judgment.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Far be it to You from doing as the word the this, to kill a just [one] with a guilty [one]. And was as the righteous as the guilty—far be it to You! Will the Judge of all the earth not do justice?"
Peshitta (Syriac)	Far be it from you to do such a thing as this, to slay the innocent with the guilty, far be it from you, O you Judge of the whole earth! <u>Such a judgment should never be carried out.</u>
Septuagint (Greek)	Far be it from You to do such at thing, so as to destroy the righteous with the wicked, so the righteous shall be as the wicked: far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
Significant differences:	The final phrase of the Syriac is somewhat different.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	It's not like you to do this, killing the innocent with the guilty as if there were no difference. It's not like you! Will the judge of all the earth not act justly?"
Contemporary English V.	You surely wouldn't let them be killed when you destroy the evil ones. You are the judge of all the earth, and you do what is right."
Easy English	I am sure that you would not kill the good people together with the wicked people. You would not punish the good people and the wicked people in the same way. I know that you are not like that. You are the fair judge over all the earth. You will not do that.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Surely you would not destroy the city. You would not destroy 50 good people to kill the evil people. If that happened, then good people and evil people would be the same—they would both be punished. You are the judge of all the earth. I know you will do the right thing."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Surely you won't kill the innocent with the guilty. That's impossible! You can't do that. If you did, the innocent would be punished along with the guilty. That is impossible. The judge of all the earth has to act justly."
<i>The Message</i>	Wouldn't you spare the city for the sake of those fifty innocents? I can't believe you'd do that, kill off the good and the bad alike as if there were no difference between them. Doesn't the Judge of all the Earth judge with justice?"

New Berkeley Version	Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill innocent and wicked together, for then the innocent would suffer with the wicked. Far be it from you! Should not the judge of all the earth do what is just?
New Century Version	Surely you will not destroy the good people along with the evil ones; then they would be treated the same. You are the judge of all the earth. Won't you do what is right?"
New Life Bible	May You never do such a thing as to destroy the good with the bad! May the good never be punished like the bad! You would never do such a thing! Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"
New Living Translation	Surely you wouldn't do such a thing, destroying the righteous along with the wicked. Why, you would be treating the righteous and the wicked exactly the same! Surely you wouldn't do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	You would never do such a thing as to destroy the righteous with the wicked, and treat the righteous as though they were wicked. no way! Won't you - the judge of the whole earth - do what's right?"
Ancient Roots Translinear	You will never do this word--the righteous dying with the wicked! Are the righteous as the wicked? Never from you, the Judge of all the land. Never do the verdict!"
Beck's American Translation	Far be it from You to do such a thing, to kill the good people with the bad and treat the good like the bad! Far be it from You! Will not the Judge of the whole world do right?"
Christian Community Bible	It would not be at all like you to do such a thing and you can't let the good perish with the wicked, nor treat the good and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the judge of all the earth be just?"
God's Word™	It would be unthinkable for you to do such a thing, to treat the innocent and the guilty alike and to kill the innocent with the guilty. That would be unthinkable! Won't the judge of the whole earth do what is fair?"
NIRV	"You would never kill godly people along with those who are evil, would you? You wouldn't treat godly and evil people alike. You would never do anything like that! Won't the Judge of the whole earth do what is right?"
New Jerusalem Bible	Do not think of doing such a thing: to put the upright to death with the guilty, so that upright and guilty fare alike! Is the judge of the whole world not to act justly?"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Let such a thing be far from you, to put the upright to death with the sinner: will not the judge of all the earth do right?
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Far be it from You to do as You have said, thus to kill the just and the wicked alike. It is far from You. Will not the Judge of the whole earth do justice?"
HCSB	You could not possibly do such a thing: to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. You could not possibly do that! Won't the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that the innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"
Judaica Press Complete T.	Far be it from You to do a thing such as this, to put to death the righteous with the wicked so that the righteous should be like the wicked. Far be it from You! Will the Judge of the entire earth not perform justice?"

New Advent Bible	Far be it from you to do this thing, and to slay the just with the wicked, and for the just to be in like case as the wicked; this is not beseeming you: you who judge all the earth, will not make this judgment
NET Bible®	Far be it from you to do such a thing — to kill the godly with the wicked, treating the godly and the wicked alike! Far be it from you! Will not the judge [Or "ruler."] of the whole earth do what is right [Will not the judge of the whole earth do what is right? For discussion of this text see J. L. Crenshaw, "Popular Questioning of the Justice of God in Ancient Israel," ZAW 82 (1970): 380-95, and C. S. Rodd, "Shall Not the Judge of All the Earth Do What Is Just?" ExpTim 83 (1972): 137-39]?"
NIV, ©2011	Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	Far be it from You to do according to this word, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, and so come the righteous to be as the wicked. Far be it from You! The Judge of the entire earth, will He not execute judgment?
Context Group Version	Far be that from you to do after this manner, to kill the vindicated with the wicked, so that the vindicated should be as the wicked; far be that from you: shall not the Judge of all the land { or earth } do right?
English Revised Version	Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"
exeGesese companion Bible	Far be it from you to work this word, to deathify the just with the wicked: and that it be, as the just, as the wicked. Far be it from you! The Judge of all the earth, works he not judgment?
Heritage Bible	Far be it from you to act in this manner, to kill the righteous with the wicked, and be it far from you that the righteous should be as the wicked. Shall not the one who judges all the earth do righteous judgment?
LTHB	Far be it from You to act in this way, to put to death the righteous with the wicked. Far be it from You. The Judge of all the earth, shall He not do right?
Modern KJV	Far be it from You to act in this manner, to kill the righteous with the wicked. And far be it from You, that the righteous should be as the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
NASB	Far be it from You to do such a thing [Lit after this manner], 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 [Lit do justice]?"
Syndein	That 'be far from you to do/manufacture {'asah} according to doctrine categorically communicated {dabar}' {means that this does not agree with the doctrine already in Abraham's' spiritually mature soul} . . . to slay the righteous with the wicked and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from you {does not agree with his understanding of God's divine viewpoint}. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do/manufacture {'asah - out of divine viewpoint} 'proper judgment' {mishpat}?" {Note: This is a bold statement by Abraham, but it is based on his knowledge of God through His Word!}.

World English Bible

Be it far from you to do things like that, to kill the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked. May that be far from you. Shouldn't the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Young's Updated LT

Far be it from You to do according to this thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked; that it has been—as the righteous so the wicked—far be it from You; does the Judge of all the earth not do justice?"

The gist of this verse:

Abraham continues to reason with God—will He treat the righteous on earth as He treats the wicked? Should not the Judge of the whole earth do that which is just?

Genesis 18:25a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
châlîylâh (חֵלִילָה) [pronounced <i>khaw-LEE-law</i>]	<i>far be it [from me or you], to profane [something], a profanity!, a blasphemy!</i>	adverb, substantive, interjection	Strong's #2486 BDB #321
Châlîylâh might be updated to <i>no way, impossible, ridiculous, absurd, that's wrong, that's so wrong, it's wrong, you're completely mistaken.</i>			
Owen says that this has a locative hê affixed to it, but that appears to simply be the final consonant in this word.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

Translation: Far be it to You from doing such a thing,...

We begin to develop an understanding as to how much Abraham knew about God. Abraham uses some strong language here. *It is impossible for You to do such a thing! It is a blasphemy that You could do this thing!* Here is the scenario: there is a city and there are 50 righteous men in the city—50 people who have believed in Y^ehowah

Elohim—and it would be blasphemous for God to destroy that city; it would be impossible. I have left the kaph preposition out of my translation; but the idea is, it is impossible that God would do anything *like* this; it would be blasphemous for God to do anything which *approximates* this.

Genesis 18:25b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> °]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
tsaddîyq (צַדִּיק) [pronounced <i>tsahd-DEEK</i>]	<i>just, righteous, justified, vindicated; absolute or perfect righteousness [if applied to God]</i>	adjective, often used as a substantive	Strong's #6662 BDB #843
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
râshâ‘ (רָשָׁע) [pronounced <i>raw-SHAWG</i>]	<i>unrighteous; malevolent, lawless, corrupt, wicked (hostile to God); criminal; guilty [of sin] [against God or man]; having an unrighteous cause</i>	masculine singular adjective; can act like a substantive	Strong's #7563 BDB #957

Translation: ...to kill a righteous [man] like a guilty [man].

What Abraham determines is impossible, is for God to kill a righteous man with a guilty man. They are standing together and God takes them both out; they are in the same general geographical location, and God removes them both.

Based upon what Abraham knows about God, he is certain that God will not destroy a city where there are 50 righteous people—50 believers—in that city. Also note what Abraham believes to be true that is not spoken: he is certain that God is capable of destroying a city. God does not require an invading army in order to destroy a corrupt population.

Genesis 18:25c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w° (or v°) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

Genesis 18:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
tsaddîyq (צַדִּיק) [pronounced tsahd-DEEK]	<i>just, righteous, justified, vindicated; absolute or perfect righteousness [if applied to God]</i>	adjective, often used as a substantive with the definite article	Strong's #6662 BDB #843
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
When the kaph preposition is doubled, it should be rendered as... <i>and as, as...so; how...thus; as well...as.</i>			
râshâ' (רָשָׁע) [pronounced raw-SHAWG]	<i>unrighteous; malevolent, lawless, corrupt, wicked (hostile to God); criminal; guilty [of sin] [against God or man]; having an unrighteous cause</i>	masculine singular adjective; can act like a substantive; with the definite article	Strong's #7563 BDB #957

Translation: That the righteous should be as the guilty...

It is difficult to come up with a clean, word-for-word translation of this, but the concept is easy to understand: it is wrong to presume that God would treat the righteous exactly as He deals with the guilty. Things are the same for the righteous—those who have been saved by faith in Jehovah—as they are for the corrupt, the lawless.

Genesis 18:25d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
châlîylâh (חַלִּילָה) [pronounced khaw-LEE-law]	<i>far be it [from me or you], to profane [something], a profanity!, a blasphemy!</i>	adverb, substantive, interjection	Strong's #2486 BDB #321
Châlîylâh might be updated to <i>no way, impossible, ridiculous, absurd, that's wrong, that's so wrong, it's wrong, you're completely mistaken.</i>			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix; pausal form	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation:...—far be it to You!

Abraham repeats this expletive, if you will. This is profane! This is blasphemy! This is impossible for God! God cannot treat the just here on earth exactly as He treats the wicked.

Application: For the most part, if you are a believer reading this, you feel safe in your own house; you feel safe on your street; and you would have no problem hopping in your car and driving off to the store, to church or to wherever. This is not true for every believer, but for most believers who desire to know the Word of God. God is making it possible for you to take in the Word of God; to understand that which He has given to us. Now, let's say that you live in a nation where there are almost all unbelievers—a nation in the Middle East (apart from Israel, which is kind toward Christians). You can be out shopping, and your store can be bombed; your children at school may be destroyed by explosive devices. You may be a hard-hearted Palestinian (who would not be reading and studying the Word of God), and people may be lobbing rockets into Israel, and you think that is great—but you do not know when Israel may justly attack and destroy hundreds of people in the attack.

Application: There is a balance here; but on the whole, believers have better lives than unbelievers. God does cause it to rain on the just as the unjust, but, overall, God has given us greater blessing here on this earth.

Genesis 18:25e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i>		Strong's #none BDB #209
shâphaṭ (שֹׁפֵט) [pronounced <i>shaw-FAHT</i>]	<i>the one judging [governing]; a judge, governor; one set up to temporarily guide and rule Israel</i>	masculine singular, Qal active participle, construct state	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047
Although Owen does not list this as a masculine singular, it appears to be functioning more like a noun than as a verb.			
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Genesis 18:25e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
mîsh ^e pâṭ (משפט) [pronounced <i>mish^e-PAWT</i>]	<i>judgement, justice, a verdict rendered by a judge, a judicial decision, a judicial sentence, a verdict, a judgement of the court</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4941 BDB #1048

Translation: Will not the Judge of the whole earth render [lit., *construct*] a just decision?"

Again, Abraham goes right for the character of God. With regards to a city of wickedness and God dealing with such a city, will God not do that which is right? Will He not render a just decision? God's verdict must be in keeping with His character.

When God is called the judge of the earth, this does not mean that He judges the earth per se, but He judges the inhabitants of the earth. This figure of speech is called a metonymy [pronounced *me-TON-y-my*] where the word used actually stands for another. Furthermore, it is Jesus Christ Who is speaking here, for God committed all judgment to him. "For not even the Father judges any one, but He has given all judgement to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father Who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me, has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live; for just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." (John 5:22–27).

Genesis 18:25 Far be it to You from doing such a thing, to kill a righteous [man] like a guilty [man]. That the righteous should be as the guilty—far be it to You! Will not the Judge of the whole earth render [lit., *construct*] a just decision?" (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:25 This is impossible for You to do such a thing, to kill a righteous man like a guilty person! That the righteous man should be treated just like the guilty—that is impossible for You! Shouldn't the Judge of the entire earth render a just verdict?" (Kukis paraphrase)

McGee: *That is still a question that many people ask: "Should not the Judge of all the earth do [that which is] right?" And there is an answer to it. The rest of the Bible testifies to the fact that the Judge of all the earth always does right. Whatever God does is right, and if you don't think He is right, the trouble is not with God, but the trouble is with you and your thinking. You are thinking wrong; you do not have all the facts; you do not know all of the details. If you did, you would know that the Judge of all the earth does right. We are wrong; He is right.*⁴⁷

Vv. 24 and 25 belong together: "Suppose for a moment that there are 50 believers in this city—would You indeed destroy this city and not, instead, bear up this place because there are 50 righteous people who live there? This is impossible for You to do such a thing, to kill a righteous man like a guilty person! That the righteous man should be treated just like the guilty—that is impossible for You! Shouldn't the Judge of the entire earth render a just verdict?"

⁴⁷ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed January 2, 2014 (slightly edited).

What is going on here is very much like the book of Job. In the book of Job, the first portion is Job and his 3 friends discussing what they believe to be true of God and what God does. Near the end, Job speaks with God and it is laid out for him what God is like.

Abraham is quite certain that he understands the character and essence of God. God is right there with him. So Abraham asks God point blank—isn't this Who You are? Should I not expect You to act according to Your character?

This is why God loves Abraham; this is why God has given so much to Abraham. Abraham understands God; Abraham understands God's character.

Application: In our prayers, it is alright (if not commendable) to point out why they should be answered or why God should listen to us; particularly if it involves invoking what we know to be true of God's character. Even under limited revelation, Abraham knew that God's treatment of the righteous is not the same as His treatment of the wicked; and if God is destroying an area because of the gross immorality, this is not the fault of the believers who inhabit this area.

Abraham reasons, if God simply destroys the righteous with the wicked, is that really just? He is not disagreeing that there ought to be judgement brought upon the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah, but that those who have believed Y^ehowah Elohim would not swept away in this judgment. God agrees with Abraham's reasoning.

The importance of Abraham's entreaty cannot be overestimated. It will seem like a genealogy, but there are several important truths to be ascertained from Abraham's prayer:

What we learn about prayer in studying Abraham

- The salt principle; enough believers residing in an area will deliver that area from God's wrath.
- We should approach God on behalf of others in our prayers.
- We should approach God on the basis of His character.
- We should approach God on the basis of doctrine in our souls.
- It takes a very small percentage of believers to insure the safety of their general geographical area.
- God will listen to us and God will be patient with us.
- Whereas we, as believers, often suffer with the unrighteous, God is still our protection.
- Throughout this prayer, notice, particularly in v. 27, that Abraham is grace oriented. He recognizes that he is nothing in God's sight yet he recognizes that God will hear him.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

And so says Y^ehowah, "If I find in Sodom 50 righteous ones in a midst of the city and I will lift up to all the place because of them."

Genesis
18:26

And Y^ehowah said, "If I can find 50 vindicated men in Sodom, in the midst of the city, then I will bear [the sin] with regards to the whole place because of them."

And Jehovah answered him, "If I can find 50 believers in the midst of Sodom, then I will bear their sin because of those righteous believers."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the Lord said, If I find in Sedom fifty innocent in the midst of the city <u>who pray before Me</u> , I will forgive all the land on their account.
Latin Vulgate	And the Lord said to him: If I find in Sodom fifty just within the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Y ^e howah, "If I find in Sodom 50 righteous ones in a midst of the city and I will lift up to all the place because of them."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole country for their sake.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord said, If there should be in Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare <u>the whole city</u> , and the whole place for their sakes.
Significant differences:	Both the targum and the Greek have some additional text.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	The LORD replied, "If I find fifty good people in Sodom, I will save the city to keep them from being killed."
Easy English	So the *Lord replied, `If I find 50 *righteous men in Sodom city, I will allow the whole city to remain. Because of them, I will not destroy the city and I will not kill the people in it.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Then the Lord said, "If I find 50 good people in the city of Sodom, I will save the whole city."
Good News Bible (TEV)	The LORD answered, "If I find fifty innocent people in Sodom, I will spare the whole city for their sake."
<i>The Message</i>	GOD said, "If I find fifty decent people in the city of Sodom, I'll spare the place just for them."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And the Lord said, 'If there are fifty righteous [people] in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole city - and the whole place - for their sakes.'
Ancient Roots Translinear	Yahweh said, "If I find fifty righteous in the midst of the city of Sodom, I will lift anyone in the place because of them."
Christian Community Bible	Yahweh said, "If I find fifty good people in Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."
NIRV	The Lord said, "If I find 50 godly people in the city of Sodom, I will save it. I will spare the whole place because of them."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And the Lord said, If there are fifty upright men in the town, I will have mercy on it because of them.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	The LORD accordingly answered, "If I find fifty just men in the whole city of Sodom, then I will for their sakes take off My hand from all the place."
Judaica Press Complete T.	And the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous men within the city, I will forgive the entire place for their sake."

NET Bible®

So the LORD replied, "If I find in the city of Sodom fifty godly people, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

And the Lord said, If I find in the city of Sodom fifty righteous (upright and in right standing with God), I will spare the whole place for their sake.

Concordant Literal Version

And saying is Yahweh, "If finding am I in Sodom fifty righteous in the midst of the city, then bear will I with the entire place for their sake.

Context Group Version

And YHWH said, If I find in Sodom fifty vindicated inside the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake.

Heritage Bible

And Jehovah said, If there exist to me in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

LTHB

And Jehovah said, If I find fifty righteous within the city, in Sodom, then I will spare all the place because of them.

NASB

So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare [Or forgive] the whole place on their account."

World English Bible

Yahweh said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake."

Young's Updated LT

And Jehovah says, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous in the midst of the city, then have I borne with all the place for their sake."

The gist of this verse:

God agrees to Abraham, that if there are 50 believers in this region, then all of it will be spared from judgment because of the 50.

Genesis 18:26a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'āmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'îm (אם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49

The particle 'îm (אם) can be used as a demonstrative (*lo, behold*), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (*if, though*); an indication of a wish or desire (*oh that, if only*; this is a rare usage).

Genesis 18:26a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
mâtsâ' (מצא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Sedum (שׂדֶם) [pronounced seh-d-OHM]	<i>burning; which is transliterated Sodom</i>	masculine singular locative noun	Strong's #5467 BDB #690
chämishîym (חֲמִשִּׁים) [pronounced khuh-mih-SHEEM]	<i>fifty</i>	plural numeral	Strong's #2572 BDB #332
tsaddîyqîym (צַדִּיקִים) [pronounced tsa-hd-dee-KEEM]	<i>just ones, righteous ones, justified ones; [those who have been] vindicated</i>	masculine plural adjective, often used as a substantive	Strong's #6662 BDB #843
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
tâvek ^e (תַּוֶּכֶּה) [pronounced tau-VEK ^{eh}]	<i>midst, among, middle</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8432 BDB #1063
With the bêyth preposition, tâvek ^e can mean <i>in the middle of, in the midst of; into, among</i> . In the Hebrew, this is spelled תַּוֶּכֶּה. With the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix, it can mean <i>in your midst, among you</i> . with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix, it can mean <i>in their midst, among them</i> .			
îyr (עִיר) [pronounced géer]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

Translation: And Y^{eh}owah said, "If I can find 50 vindicated men in Sodom, in the midst of the city,..."

Jehovah speaks to Abraham in time; so He uses the imperfect tense. He is suggesting that He will look throughout the city in the future and see if He can find 50 men (and women) who are saved.

Genesis 18:26b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 18:26b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
nâsâ' (נָשָׂא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
<p>Nâsâ' actually has a variety of Qal meanings: It means ❶ <i>to take up, to lift up, to bear up</i>; ❷ <i>to lift up someone's head</i> (this is used in a favorable way; i.e., it is misused to mean <i>to make one cheerful or merry</i>); ❸ <i>to lift up one's own countenance, i.e., to be cheerful, full of confidence</i>, ❹ <i>to bear, to carry</i>, ❺ <i>to lift up in a balance, i.e., to weigh carefully</i>; ❻ <i>to bear one's sin or punishment</i>, ❼ <i>to lift up the voice</i> (this can be used in the sense of bewailing, crying, crying out, rejoicing, <i>to lift up any with the voice</i> (a song, an instrument); ❽ <i>to lift up the soul</i> (i.e., <i>to wish for, to desire</i>); ❾ <i>to have the heart lifted up</i> (i.e., they are ready and willing to do something); ❿ <i>to bear one's sin</i> (in such a way to expiate the sin, to make atonement for the sin, to pardon the sin). This list does not exhaust the various connotations for nâsâ'. BDB adds the following: <i>to support, to sustain, to endure; to take, to take away, to carry off, to forgive</i>.</p>			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^o]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
mâqôwm (מִקוֹמָם) [pronounced maw-KOHM]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
ba'ăbûwr (בְּאֲבוּרָם) [pronounced bah-ġu ^b -VOOR]	<i>because of, for, that, for the sake of, on account of, in order that; while</i>	preposition/conjunction; substantive always found combined with the bêyth preposition; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5668 BDB #721

Actually a combination of the bêyth preposition (*in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before*) and 'ăbûwr (בְּאֲבוּרָם) [pronounced ġaw^v-BOOR] which means *a passing over, a transition; the cause of a crossing over; the price [of transferring ownership of something]; purpose, objective*. Properly, it is the passive participle of Strong's #5674 BDB #720. Strong's #5668 BDB #721.

Translation: ...then I will bear [the sin] with regards to the whole place because of them."

If God can find 50 believers in Sodom, then He will bear the sin of these people—of the entire city—because of the believers who are there.

God gives Abraham assurances that He would preserve the city for 50 believers. What is being established is, God will preserve certain cities based upon there being born-again believers in that city. This is, more or less,

what R. B. Thieme, Jr. called the *pivot*. Given that Lot is who he is, we may reason that God is simply speaking of simply born-again believers.

Genesis 18:26 And Y^ehowah said, "If I can find 50 vindicated men in Sodom, in the midst of the city, then I will bear [the sin] with regards to the whole place because of them." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:26 And Jehovah answered him, "If I can find 50 believers in the midst of Sodom, then I will bear their sin because of those righteous believers." (Kukis paraphrase)

The National Entity Insert: What follows will be a great deal of material dealing with the believer in Jesus Christ, the mature believer in Jesus Christ, and the national entity wherein they reside.

You will recall that I have made reference to the **spiritual pivot** of a nation (another R. B. Thieme, Jr. term). A nation is preserved by several factors

What Preserves and Prospers a National Entity

1. The number of believers within the nation preserves and prospers a nation. This will be borne out by our study of Genesis 18:23–33. Abraham will ask God if He will destroy these city-states, if there are believers there.
2. The number of mature believers within the nation preserves and prospers a nation. R. B. Thieme, Jr. calls these the *pivot*,
3. The relationship to Jews within that national entity.
4. The relationship of that nation to Israel. Obviously, there is no Israel at the time that this takes place, but I am looking forward in this point.
5. The amount of doctrine which is associated with that national entity. How many Bibles is it printing and disseminating; how much truth is found in its literature and in its pulpits.
6. The number of missionaries which are sent out. Again this looks forward in time. Lot could be seen as, to some extent, a missionary. He was not very good and had little intention of spreading the word of Jehovah; but that would have been a good reason for he and Abraham to split up. However, they went their separate ways because they were having constant disputes about personal ownership. Genesis 13:6

Quite obviously, all of these things are interrelated. If there are not a significant number of mature believers in a national entity, then they would not be developing and disseminating Bible doctrine and they would not be sending out missionaries.

This doctrine is clearly related to **blessing by association** . A nation is blessed because of the believers and maturing believers which live within that nation.

You will note that having a good functioning democracy or republic is not a part of this list. We are blessed in the United States with a wonderful republic, but such a government requires personal morality and integrity, knowledge of the government and knowledge of the issues. At this point, these things are improving among the masses in the United States, but so is the resolve of those on the left and far left. However, what will preserve our nation are the factors enumerated above.

This is why the nations in Iraq and Afghanistan will likely be unsuccessful allies to the United States; while Japan and South Korea have become wonderful long-term allies to the United States. President George W. Bush believed that the key to a free nation was a healthy democracy, so that he attempted to establish a democracy in Iraq and in Afghanistan (I write this in 2012). But helping a country to achieve a democratic form of government will not preserve that nation; nor will it insure that nation will become a long-term ally of the United States.

In England and in several other European countries, the number of believers is decreasing; and, therefore, those who attend church are becoming fewer and fewer as well. At the same time, adherents to Satan's dominate religion of our day, Islam, are growing in numbers. This is why Europe is becoming more and more unstable, more violent and has become increasingly a less popular destination for travelers.

In case you did not yet buy into this, this information will be covered in greater detail in lessons to come with a lot of Scripture included.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

I have mentioned the British Empire on many occasions in previous lessons. For a time, this tiny nation England controlled a huge portion of the world, and everywhere they went, they brought civilization, law and order and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The law and order is another way of saying they brought in the laws of divine establishment and gave society order, structure and law. Then, evangelization and Bible teaching could take place. Therefore, God blessed and prospered England at this time.

One of my most favorite maps is below, where all that is in pink is ruled or strongly influenced by the British empire. All of these regions were improved because the Brits took them over. The key to all of this is Bible doctrine and evangelism.

The British Empire (map); accessed January 1, 2014.



From: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/26/The_British_Empire.png

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

You have to look carefully to actually see Great Britain, because it is so small by comparison to all that it ruled over.

What Britain did in the era was great. God blessed them as a nation and as an empire, and, as the saying goes, *The Sun Never Sets on the Union Jack*. The union jack was on their flag, and there was always some part of the British Empire which was in daylight. Why was Great Britain great? It had a great number of its populace who believed in Jesus Christ and many of them were growing and mature believers.

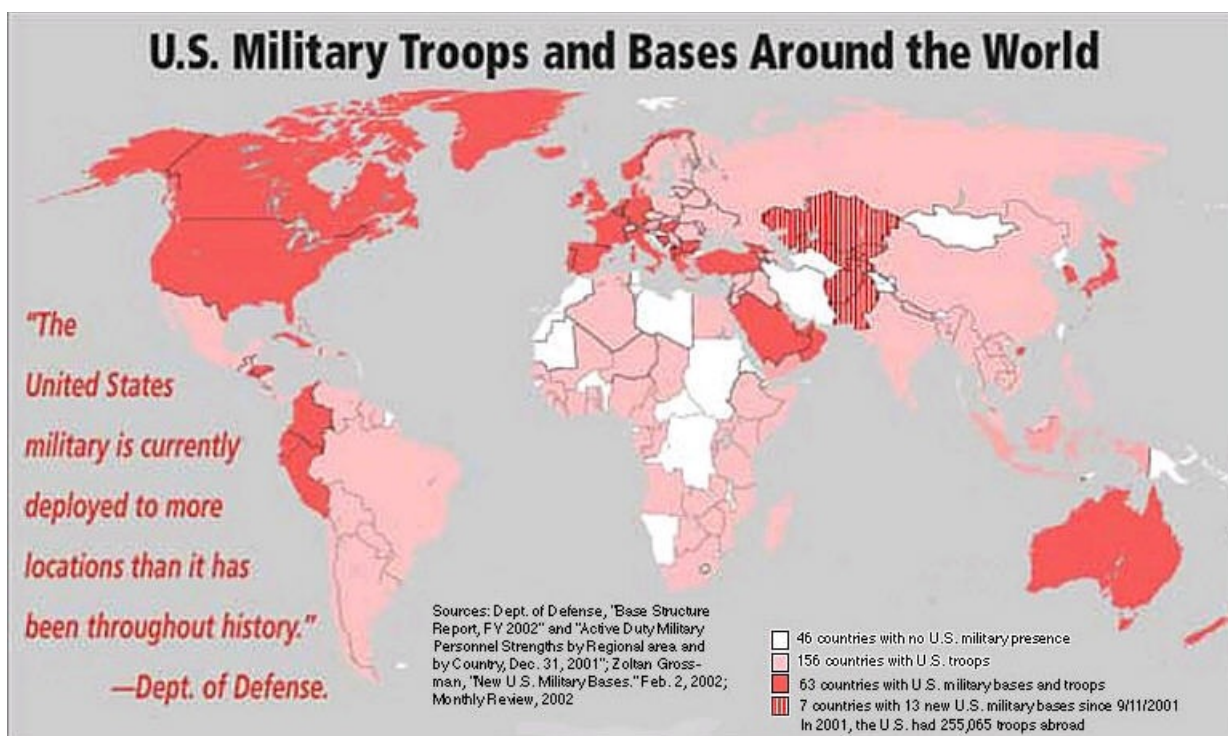
But where is Great Britain today? They lost their desire to know the Word of God; their churches are all but empty; many have been **converted into mosques**.⁴⁸ And in their major cities, Muslims rage, refusing to assimilate, and demanding the application of sharia law. England went from being the great empire in the world to a struggling nation beset by debt and a population of those who believe in the welfare state because this is what they have been raised in. Fewer and fewer believers in a nation means that nation goes down and even England may even be thrown upon the dust heap of history.

When I heard prophecy taught and how that the Revived Roman Empire would be hostile to Israel, that seemed rather far-fetched to me. When I first heard that, WWII was not too far in the past where Europe was at war with one another. Furthermore, apart from the holocaust, much of Europe was relatively friendly with the Jew. However, since then the European Union has arisen, and there have been so many Muslims immigrating to Europe that there is a strong anti-Semitic sentiment throughout the larger cities in Europe.

In the United States, our influence has spread in a very different way. We have military bases all over the world, and we have given freedom and have protected the freedom of nations throughout the world. At one time in my life, the idea of a WWIII seemed inevitable, and now, that is no longer the case. This does not mean that a WWIII will not occur; but it is not as appear quite as imminent as it once did.

U.S. Military Troops and Bases Around the World (map). From [Economy Policy Journal](#); accessed January 1, 2014.

⁴⁸ In fact, in Google, I typed in "Churches in England converted..." and before I had completed the word *converted*, Google was ready to fill in the remainder.



Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

What is the key? Believers in the United States; believers with Bible doctrine in their souls; the relationship between the United States and nation Israel, the relationship between the United States and the Jewish people; missionaries who are sent out; and the dissemination of Bible doctrine and the Word of God.

President George Bush had the opportunity of doing something great—evangelizing the Middle East. He was probably the most well-read presidents of our generation and a man who had a greater historical perspective of the world than any president of the past 100 years (apart from Eisenhower and maybe Reagan), but he missed the crucial factor of God's Word.

After we had bombed Japan, General Douglas MacArthur ruled over the restoration of Japan with a kind and benevolent hand. He also **called for** 5000 missionaries and 10 million Bibles. It is this approach that has made Japan (and Germany and South Korea) our greatest and most valuable allies in the world today.

President Bush thought that the key to a great nation is democracy; that a middle-eastern democracy is the key to peace in this world. But there will be no peace in the world. And far more important than self-rule is, Bible doctrine. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the key to peace and prosperity, followed by the teaching of the Word of God. This requires the free will of the people.

Just as the British Empire faded away, so can the military influence of the United States. It could disappear in our lifetimes; not because of peace demonstrations but because of a lack of Bible doctrine in the souls of the believers in the United States.

Personally, I love working in the Old Testament, and Genesis is possibly my favorite book because it is so packed with doctrinal information. However, all believers right now, while you are reading this, are Church Age believers. You are a believer in Jesus Christ during the Church Age; and I am a believer during the Church Age. We live during a different dispensation from the people in Genesis, so there are a number of things which are different. That is, we have a different set of doctrines by which we are to function as believers. In the book of Genesis, there is no nation Israel, no extensive law to guide a nation; and the first advent of Jesus Christ is future, as is the institution of the church.

However, it is the same God and the same human race (with the resident sin natures); so there are also continuities between the **dispensations**. Furthermore, God the Holy Spirit inspired the Old Testament just as He did the New; so we would be wrong to ignore or dismiss it as inapplicable to our lives.

The greatest problem with people who study the Old Testament is, they confuse their place in this world and begin to do oddball things like “keeping the Sabbath.” The same person would never start raising and sacrificing lambs, as was done in the Old Testament; but they cannot distinguish between the continuities and differences of these dispensations. Therefore, now and again, we need to be looking into the New Testament and relating what we learn in the Old Testament to our place as believers today.

What we have been studying is believers within a national entity, and that God deals with us as individuals, but He also deals with man corporately. That is, nations and cities (and a variety of other groups) are used by God and dealt with corporately by God, insofar as He blesses some and curses others. Abraham has been bargaining for the preservation of Sodom, based upon what he believes to be true (that there are 10 believers in Sodom).

Romans 13:1–10 Interlude:

For a couple of lessons, we are going to move 3000 years into the future from Abraham, and look at the Apostle Paul and the nation of Rome (SPQR = Senatus Populusque Romanus which is translated *The Senate and People of Rome*). Believers in the time of Paul lived in a nation which both persecuted Christian believers and would eventually destroy Jerusalem, killing and scattering the Jews of Judah and Jerusalem.

Paul needed to make certain that believers knew how to interact within and with a national entity which was not necessarily sympathetic to Christianity and portions of which were even hostile towards them.

Rom 13:1 **Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities. For there is no authority but of God; the authorities that exist are ordained by God.** Most of the translation used here for Romans 13 is the Modern KJV, but it will be modified from time to time.

At the end of Romans 12, Paul explained to believers how they were to interact with one another and how they were to deal with individuals who were specifically hostile towards them. In Romans 13 (there are no chapter divisions in the original Greek New Testament), Paul explains our relationship to the nation in which we find ourselves. Whereas, we can draw some application from Genesis 18 and learn some principles, Paul will lay out exactly our place within a national entity during the Church Age.

Paul is making sure that the believer does not overstep his place in a nation and get involved in social action. I saw a great example of this in my own lifetime. Martin Luther King, Jr. became involved in securing civil liberties for blacks in this nation, and he worked tirelessly through churches. Now, that blacks ought to have the same rights as anyone else in the United States is not only reasonable; but constitutional. However, the church was not the proper vehicle for securing those liberties. By working through churches, Martin Luther King, Jr. corrupted the black church in America, and changed it from being a vibrant place of spiritual growth and refreshment to, in many

cases, a political vehicle; which has evolved, in many cases, to be a political arm for the Democratic party today and for communism (I understand that about 1 in 10 black churches in America are Black Liberation Churches, and its doctrine is socialistic and communistic at its core). Because of the inordinate admiration for Martin Luther King, Jr., the black church today is a shadow of what it was 60 or 70 years ago. There are certainly black churches which teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, but few teach accurate doctrine, which means, their power and influence are very limited (the destroyed black family is evidence of that).

What has been the result? Obviously there are fewer Black believers percentage-wise today; and far fewer mature Black believers. And in society, despite there being far less racism than there was in the 1950's, there are more Black families in poverty; there are more Black children (percentage-wise) in poverty; there are more Black pregnant unmarried teenagers; there are fewer Black people working (percentage-wise) (did you know that before the Great Depression, Blacks had a lower unemployment rate than whites?)⁴⁹; and there is more crime in Black neighborhoods committed by Black people. When you set aside spiritual growth, opting instead for political reform, the end is not very pretty.

Martin Luther King, Jr. offered a political solution; a social solution—not a spiritual solution. So, those who followed him became politically active, leaving the teachings of the Bible behind. Many Blacks put their faith in the political system and into social action; and, at the same time, their dependence upon God was transformed into dependence upon the government, which is a logical progression. If a person believes that their interaction with government is more important than their relationship with God, then he will pursue governmental changes and policies, and come to depend upon the government to enact those policies. Logically, that person's happiness will become tied to the actual enactment of specific governmental policies.

Far more important to African Americans is their spiritual heritage than integration and equal rights. When integration and equal rights was seen as the highest good, the true good which was once taught in their churches was left behind, disregarded, pushed out and seemed to become irrelevant to many Black Americans. Therefore, anyone with doctrine in their souls could understand that, this direction that Martin Luther King, Jr. took his fellow African-Americans in was away from the truth of God's Word. Therefore, this movement away from God's Word would be far more destructive to Black Americans than the segregation and prejudice they sought to remove. No longer did the Black family simply accept the concept that what the Bible prescribed is good; but now many depend as much or more upon their politicians for good.

There was a time in America when Black families were strong—they had doctrinal values; Black churches taught the gospel and Bible doctrine; and Black unemployment, from time-to-time, was lower than white unemployment (prior to the Great Depression, both Black and white unemployment was below 4%).

So Paul is making certain that the local church does not become a vehicle for social action and social change. Quite obviously, Roman persecution of Christians is evil. As a result, believers, in the time of Paul, did not have equal rights. However, the enemy of Christianity was not the Roman empire. **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places** (Ephesians 6:12).

⁴⁹ From Walter E. Williams, an economist: *From 1900 to 1954, blacks were more active than whites in the labor market. Until about 1960, black male labor force participation in every age group was equal to or greater than that of whites. During that period, black teen unemployment was roughly equal to or less than white teen unemployment. As early as 1900, the duration of black unemployment was 15 percent shorter than that of whites; today it's about 30 percent longer.* From [Townhall](#) accessed January 3, 2014.

Therefore, Paul did not organize a human rights march on Rome and demand equal rights for Christians, even though Christians were being persecuted. Paul himself had been imprisoned by the Romans and Paul would eventually be executed by the Roman authorities. Instead, Paul wrote:

Rom 13:1 (ESV) **Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.**

Romans 13:1 is the general principle. We live in a fallen world; every person on this earth has a sin nature; and we are organized into individual national entities. Whatever governing authorities are over us, we are to obey those authorities.

So there is no misunderstanding, we are allowed two exceptions to this principle: we are mandated by God to go into all the world and evangelize it (Mark 16:15 Acts 1:8 Romans 10:18 16:26 Revelation 14:6); and churches are to teach Bible doctrine so that the believers in each local church can grow spiritually (Acts 20:28 Romans 12:1–2 1Timothy 5:17 Hebrews 13:7, 17 1Peter 5:2–3). Therefore, Peter, in Acts 5:29, said, **"We must obey God rather than men"** when he was told to stop evangelizing and to stop teaching Jesus.

This does not give us the right to disobey laws that we do not like or that we believe are unjust. That leads to chaos and lawlessness within a national entity.

Therefore, **Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.** God instituted these authorities over men in order to maintain law and order within a society, because it is this law and order which allows believers to both evangelize and to teach the Word of God freely in local churches. Paul and the other apostles were able to travel all over the Roman Empire because law and order had been established throughout.

A good modern example of places where such law and order does not exist is the Middle East and portions of Africa, where the Arab Spring is occurring. Every week, Christians are persecuted and killed; churches are burned down in these areas. These places had strong, brutal dictators because only a strong, brutal dictator could maintain order among Muslims wherein there is a sprinkling of Christians (and sometimes Jews). Since the Arab Spring has begun, attacks against Christians and Christian churches has been commonplace, occurring often daily in the Middle East and parts of Africa.

We have been made to believe, for instance, that Hosni Mubarak, former ruler of Egypt, was this awful, evil person, and that the people of Egypt bravely stood up as one to oust him. But, the Bible says: **Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.** Egypt was involved with war against Israel on several occasions, which is the wrong side to be on. However, Mubarak maintained the peace with Israel for 3 decades. In the early 2000's, there were sporadic killings of Christians in Egypt, and their laws were definitely discriminatory, but, in 2011, there were **27 attacks against Christians** by Islamists in Egypt that resulted in deaths or injuries of Christians.

Therefore, even though there were injustices incurred by Christians by the Roman government, Paul did not go to church after church and complain about how the Roman Empire was being mean to Christians. Paul never taught that we needed to band together and march on the city of Rome. He did not rouse the people of these churches into a resistance against the Roman authorities. The early church would have never grown apart from the order brought to these lands by the Roman Empire. Paul could travel all over the Roman Empire on his 4 missionary journeys because of Roman law and the enforcement of that law. In fact, on one occasion, Paul, as a Roman citizen, exploited his rights under Roman law and appealed to Cæsar (Acts 25).

Rom 13:2 **So that the one resisting the authority resists the ordinance of God; and the ones who resist will receive judgment to themselves.**

It does not matter that you have come across some laws which you find to be unjust. It is not our place as believers to resist the authority over us set by God. Now, we have to be careful here, because in the United States, we live in a government where most laws are enacted by our elected representatives. A believer ought to fully understand the laws of divine establishment, understand to some degree the political issues of the day, and vote accordingly. That is a part of our national heritage. Since we vote for leaders and for some legislation, it is important for us to have an idea as to what we are voting on.

However, the church is not the place to push this or that political candidate or this or that political issue (apart from teaching the **laws of divine establishment**). Clearly, in the time of Martin Luther King, Jr., blacks were being discriminated against legally and personally. However, it was not the place of the church to fix that. The church was not to be used as a political vehicle in any way, even though the cause seemed just. Most of the time, when you fix one social problem, a myriad of new social problems appear, often as a result.

Paul is telling those in the Roman church not to resist the Roman authorities. The Roman authorities are placed there by God in order to provide for the freedoms of the people and to protect the people throughout their empire.

What did Martin Luther King, Jr. teach? “Resist the authorities over you.”

Therefore, when you resist authorities over you, you are resisting the ordinance of God; and in your resistance, you will bring judgment from God on yourself. This does not mean that the believer cannot be politically active and even run for office (that is a legitimate calling in life for the believer, just like any other). However, Paul is clear here: if you resist the authorities that God places over you, then you are resisting the clear mandate of God. Furthermore, you are subject to judgment (which is discipline from God).

Let’s just say that some socialist is elected president, one who does not understand the founding of America or the principles which made America great. We may not resist this leader by means of unlawful behavior. We are not to organize political opposition to a president like this within our churches. Let me make this clear—we do not use your churches even to develop lawful opposition to an evil president. When we resist the authorities over us, we are resisting the ordinance of God and God will judge us as believers.

Now, understand the balance here. We can resist the president; we can march in the streets. We can write letters or post blogs. We can disagree with our President and anyone else in the government and do this all day long. But, this is not to be organized in our churches; and this does not include breaking the law or instigating violence against others—even against political heads.

Rom 13:3 **For the rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the bad. And do you desire to be not afraid of the authority? Do the good, and you shall have praise from it.**

The primary function of government is to maintain law and order. It is to make certain that both Lucy Van Pelt and Charlie Brown can live side-by-side with the same freedoms. As believers, we do what is right and honorable and we obey the laws. Quite obviously, we have some problematic laws. The Bill of Rights in the United States allows us to own firearms; and yet, in some cities, there are impossible restrictions on this freedom. Let me make this clear: if you can be arrested for it, then don’t do it. I personally believe strongly in the Bill of Rights and certainly believe that there are ridiculous restrictions which are put upon individuals by lower level governments (state, city or county). However, using the church to right such things is wrong.

Doing good here is obeying the laws of the land; *doing good* is acting in such a way that you are not afraid of the authorities. A simple example is, driving down the road, obeying the traffic laws. If you speed, run red lights, go through stop signs, or drive unsafely, then you have reason to be afraid of the authorities—you could be stopped at any point and ticketed.

It is not our duty as believers to fix all of the national problems and inequities that we see; we are to evangelize, grow spiritually, and obey the laws and authorities over us. As a believer, you ought not to think that, at any moment, the governing authorities can come to your home and arrest you for something that you have done or are doing. If you are doing something for which you could be arrested, then you need to stop doing it. Your works need to be good, and not evil. What you do every day needs to be within the law.

Paul also writes: **Do the good, and you shall have praise from it.** Does this mean that every believer should expect to win a “Good Citizens Award” in his lifetime? No. We are not concerned about the praise of man; it is God Who praises us for obeying the laws over us. However, in this context, it does mean to receive praise from the ruling authority; which simply means, you are approved in your actions and you are not persecuted by the ruling authorities.

Keep in mind, the person writing these words, Paul, was unjustly persecuted by the law; other apostles that he knew were unjustly persecuted by the law, and yet he writes: **For the rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the bad. And do you desire to be not afraid of the authority? Do the good, and you shall have praise from it.** And of those who read these words, I can guarantee you that 99.9% of you have no clue as to what it is to be truly persecuted for your faith.

What we have been studying is the latter half of Genesis 18, when God tells Abraham that He is about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, because of their degeneracy. Abraham will bargain with God face to face, which is where he will try to determine at what point is a geographical entity in danger of being completely destroyed and, at what point does the believer in a national entity affect the actions of God. This led us to Romans 13, where we ask, what is our relationship to a nation as believers in Jesus Christ?

So far we have covered the first 3 verses of Romans 13:

Rom 13:1–3 **Let every soul be in subjection to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those who exist are ordained by God. Therefore he who resists the authority, withstands the ordinance of God; and those who withstand will receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Do you desire to have no fear of the authority? Do that which is good, and you will have praise from the same,...**

Paul lived in the Roman empire where Christians were persecuted by their government, and yet, he writes that believers and unbelievers (every soul) need to be in subjection to the higher authorities, as God ordains the authorities over us. Immediately, this takes revolution off the table.

Rom 13:4 **[The authority over you] is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he [the legal authority over you] is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.**

God places authorities over us for our benefit. These authorities are God's servant who preside over lawless Christians (yes, Christians can break laws). As the Understandable Version of the New Testament reads: **For they are servants of God for your good. But you should be afraid if you do what is evil, because they do not carry the**

sword [i.e., for executing criminals] for nothing. For they are servants of God who take revenge [on wrongdoing] by punishing the person who does evil.

When a person does wrong, authorities have set up consequences for breaking those laws. The ultimate consequence is execution by a Roman authority (in Paul's time). This is why they have swords (that is, to enforce local laws and to administer the ultimate judgement). God expects a national entity to enforce the laws of the land, and to go so far as to execute criminals. Therefore, anti-capital punishment demonstrations and movements are not of God. Paul nowhere suggests that capital punishment is going too far. In fact, right here, he not only acknowledges capital punishment, but calls the person carrying it out a *servant of God*.

That some people in authority abuse their power is not an issue. In our form of government, we are allowed to vote such people out; and even to gather and demonstrate against such leaders. However, if your political involvement takes away from your spiritual life, then you need to reduce your political involvement. For instance, let's say you are living under the worst president ever elected in the history of our time, and you have a chance to go to Washington D.C. and participate in a demonstration telling this man how terrible he is; but you will miss some Bible classes in order to do this—you choose the Bible classes rather than the demonstration. Your spiritual growth, your prayers, your spiritual influence and the exercise of your spiritual gift are far more important than you carrying a sign in the nation's capitol saying, "We don't like you very much." Let's say, you come back with, "But, I am doing this for my children." Your children need to recognize that your spiritual life is far more important than anything else. Participation in God's plan is more important than anything else. Your children need to take these cues from you.

In the 1950's and 1960's, black children saw that their parents were marching and demonstrating and they were angry and they wanted their rights; and that these were issues in their church which were seen as far more important than the gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching of Bible doctrine. These young people fully understood the priorities that their parents taught them, and they passed these priorities onto to their children and so on and so forth. The end result was, many churches today may be integrated, but many more of them are corrupt. Also, because politics was taught to be more important than God, many black children did not gravitate toward the church or dependence upon God; they gravitated toward one political party and chose to depend upon government. They learned from their parents that politics trumps the spiritual life.

The problems with infiltrating the churches with political activism are threefold: (1) Bible doctrine is crowded out; (2) you don't need church to be a political activist; and (3) the church becomes involved in **syncretism**. As a result, people do not hear the gospel; they do not hear the clear teaching of the Word of God; the younger people leave the church; and the few who stay get a mixture of truth and human viewpoint.

What happened in the 1960's? Demonstrations during which policemen and military types were called pigs and spat upon and abused. Is this what Paul suggested? Rather, he wrote: **[The authority over you] is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he [the legal authority over you] is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.** Paul calls policemen and military types *servants of God*; not *pigs*.

Rom 13:5 **Therefore you must be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.**

Paul indicates that we ought to obey the law of the land, not simply because we fear the consequences of breaking the law, but simply because our own norms and standards demand that we obey the law. We should not evaluate a particular circumstance and determine, "You know what, I am sure I can break this law and get away with it scot free. It will be the perfect crime!" We are not to conform to the laws of the land simply because we fear criminal prosecution; we are to obey these laws because our own conscience tells us it is there right thing to do.

In the 1960's and the decades which followed, there were riots, and people destroyed private property, breaking windows and smashing down doors to businesses, as well as stealing what was inside. This occurs today with the occupy movement (which appears to be dying out, so by 2013, they may not be a very good illustration). These things are wrong. Now, maybe an "occupier" does not fear the law, because he is acting in the middle of a small riot, but he ought to act from the norms and standards from his conscience, which tell him, "That is a private business; that is private property; you do not break their windows."

Now, you might say, "Well, isn't this anti-materialism? Isn't that good?" 1960's are anti-materialism when it comes to the things which belong to other people. They did not mind destroying those things. They did not destroy things which they owned and liked.

Rom 13:6 **For because of this you also pay taxes. For they are God's servants, always giving attention to this very thing.**

Now comes the uncomfortable part. We pay taxes in order to have law and order. We pay taxes in order to pay the salaries of the public servants. We are to see these people as God's servants. The Analytical-Literal translation reads: **Then, for this reason, you* also pay taxes, for they are public servants of God attending continually [or, devoting themselves] to this very thing.** The Understandable Version of the NT reads: **This is the reason why you should pay taxes also. For the authorities are God's servants who continually tend to this matter [i.e., of collecting taxes].** God's Word reads: **That is also why you pay your taxes. People in the government are God's servants while they do the work he has given them.** These men are God's servants. We pay taxes in order for them to do what they are authorized to do. Therefore, we must pay our taxes.

Again, Paul does not tie this to a just government; Paul does not say, "As long as this government does what it is supposed to do, you pay your taxes. However, as soon as they get out of line, you withhold tax monies from them." The authorities over you are God's servants and they are doing God's will. You must pay taxes so that their salaries are paid. If they are corrupt or if they abuse their position, your options are limited, but they do not include holding back tax monies.

Rom 13:7 **Therefore give to all their dues; to the one due tax, the tax; tribute to whom tribute is due, fear to whom fear is due, and honor to whom honor is due.**

The Good News Bible simplifies it to this: **Pay, then, what you owe them; pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honor for them all.**

You are to pay all of your taxes. That is a mandate from God. This is the imperative mood in the Greek. That is what God has ordered us to do. We are to pay all of the taxes that we owe and we are to show respect and honor to those in authority over us.

Now, I certainly understand some people complaining about the leaders of the United States who seem to be marching us off into bankruptcy. How can we respect leaders like this? Our political leaders essentially caused the mortgage crisis of 2000–2012; how do we have respect for this? First of all, we have respect for them because of what God's Word says. Let me remind you that we vote on our officials. And let me remind you that these leaders, God has placed over us for our benefit (Romans 13:1). Therefore, the Word of God does not give us an excuse; and the people who are in office, we voted for. So we cannot justify withholding our taxes from them.

Leaders ought to arise saying, "We need to cut your social security, your medicare benefits, several of our federal departments and about a third of the federal workforce in order for our government to balance our budget."

However, someone else comes along and says, “We will not let those evil ___ touch your social security or your medicare; we will protect it for you. And do not worry about losing your job if you work for the federal government, we will protect those jobs. And we will carefully comb through the budget and make certain that your life will be okay.” Well, even though the first person is telling you the truth, most people would vote for the second. So, if the majority of the people in a national entity want to vote for the person who will lie to them, then that is our choice.

Our economy was booming in the years 2002–2007. What would you have thought if the politicians in charge said, “We have a big problem, and we need to stop the expanding economy. The result could very well be a recession.”? Most Americans would have voted these politicians out of office. Newspapers would have run editorials against these people in office, calling them insane for suggesting that we bring a halt to what appeared to be a great period of growth. However, much of this boom was a result of a number of new regulations which gave home loans to people who should not have been given these loans using such gimmicks as *credit rapid restore*. A real leader would have said, this great economic expansion is a balloon that will burst and, is, therefore, a problem and we need to put on the breaks. No leader from either major political party rose up to say that. In fact, even though the housing bubble was a government-sanctioned boom and bust, politicians today are not admitting to that. Many were quick to point their finger at banks and mortgage companies, but also careful not to arrest anyone, because any arrest would lead us right back to government regulations and involvement.

My point is, in a democracy, we vote for our leaders, and Americans have a very difficult time hearing the truth or accepting the idea of any sort of cut back in anything. So we have the leadership that we have demanded. We may want to blame politicians for the debt mess that we are in, but we voted these politicians into office. The national debt did not just suddenly happen overnight.

Let me give you a simple example of fiscal mismanagement. Our system of social security is now taking in less than it is paying out. So, recently, Congress voted—both Republicans and Democrats—to reduce the revenue paid into social security. One group of people had been given a break from paying into social security, and both houses of Congress and both political parties voted to extend this exemption from paying social security for another year. It makes little sense to reduce revenue into a popular program which is going broke; but both political parties agreed to this tax exemption. One political party did it to create an issue; and the other did it in order to keep this from becoming an issue. Neither party voted to make reforms to social security or to develop another stream of revenue for it. Giving back the social security dues that people paid was popular, so both parties supported it.

On the cost side, social security was originally designed to start paying out about the time most people die. Now, when social security kicks in, many people live an additional 20 or 30 years. As a result, people are being paid far more than they put into social security. However, politicians of both parties are afraid to either eliminate social security or put it on a more solid economic footing. And we voted these people into office.

We live in a fallen world. Men have sin natures, and that seems to be doubly true for those in governmental authority (that is not a doctrine, however). However, it is the maintenance of law and order which is what is important, because it is this law and order which allows the gospel message to be spread and for Bible doctrine to be taught.

When it comes to the big issues in our country, certainly the massive debt, national security, entitlements, honest politicians, etc. are important; but even if we fixed every problem for the next generation (which could not ever happen in a fallen world), our children and their children would still have to choose Jesus Christ as their Savior and Bible doctrine as their guide and authority in life. If they did not, the entire country would be messed up again within a few years, if not within a few months.

There are two generations which came out of Egypt with Moses; one failed and the other succeeded. The key was not organizing a great local government. Both generations had Moses ruling over them, one of the greatest spiritual and political leaders in the history of mankind. However, one generation failed because they rejected the teaching of God's Word; and the other succeeded because they responded to the teaching of the Word of God.

Rom 13:8 **Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves the other has fulfilled the Law.**

We have to be careful about interpreting "owe no one anything." Does this mean you cannot get a house loan or a car loan? Does this mean that Paul is telling you here to cut up your credit cards? Of course not. There are laws about lending and usury in the Old Testament. It is legitimate to lend and borrow money. If it were not, the Bible would not have laws regulating such financial activity; there would have been laws against it.

So, what does it mean? This means that you pay your bills. You don't walk away from a cell phone bill or a utility bill simply because you moved. You don't move out in the middle of the night, leaving your landlord holding the bag. You don't borrow money from mom and dad and then neglect to pay it back. **Owe no one anything.** You operate honestly and honorably in life. You would hope that, anyone that you come across in a financial transaction will act just like you would. You want every person who knows you to trust you with regards to any financial transaction that you engage in.

Then Paul quotes from the Ten Commandments:

Rom 13:9 **For: "Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not lust;" and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** Paul is quoting from the Old Testament: Exodus 20:12–16 and Leviticus 19:18.

These commandments stand firm, no matter what laws exist for the general public. In the United States, adultery has become decriminalized and it is, in most states, not even an issue in a divorce. However, that does not mean that you may now commit adultery with impunity. It is still viewed by God as a bad choice in life (i.e., a sin), and you will be disciplined for it.

Let's look back at financial integrity back for a moment: when the Bible tells you that you should love your neighbor as yourself, that means that, you will not cheat them financially. On your financial record, your credit record, there should be nothing but a series of "1's", which means *paid as agreed*. The believer should never have a "9" on his credit record, which is a debt that the believer simply walked away from. You are then disobeying, **"Owe no one anything"** and **"Love your neighbor as yourself."**

I write this in 2013, and Washington State and Colorado have both just legalized marijuana, which is an intoxicant. The Bible does not mind liquor, but warns against drunkenness. Since marijuana is designed to get a person stoned, smoking a joint is wrong in the eyes of God; whereas taking a glass of wine is not. Now, are there probably some legitimate medical uses for marijuana? Probably; but medical marijuana use in California is probably 99% designed for drug-induced intoxication. So, just because a state government decriminalizes something, that does not mean it is now okay for you, as a believer in Jesus Christ, to start using it.

Rom 13:10 **Love works no ill to its neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.**

You don't cheat your neighbor; you don't get into donnybrooks with your neighbor; you don't take your neighbor to court; you have a relaxed mental attitude toward your neighbor, whom you may or may not actually like.

At this point, “love” is not an emotion; you don’t stand around and work up nice feelings toward those in your immediate periphery. Love refers to the filling of the Spirit combined with the application of Bible doctrine from your soul.

The “**Love your neighbor as yourself**” essentially commands you to think of the person on the other side of your interaction/relationship/transaction and treat them exactly as you would want to be treated if you were in their place. Quite obviously, cheating them out of money, treating them badly, hauling them into court, etc. is not how you would like to be treated.

Many of these laws and principles apply to all people in a national entity, not just to believers. Paul is writing to believers, but most of these principles should be followed by all men.

In this life, all of us belong to various corporations; we all have corporate identities. We are members of a state, city and county; we are in various geographical areas with other people; we work with other people; we go to school with other people; we are in the military with other people. Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that God deals with us as individuals, but also as corporate entities. That, in part, will be what we will study next, because Abraham and Lot are both members of corporate entities. In particular, we are looking at how God deals with Lot, a believer, who lives in Sodom, a degenerate city. This will be another chance for us to further examine political influence versus spiritual influence, because Lot is politically connected, and Abraham is not. Lot is in a high political office and Abraham is not. However, Abraham believes God and Abraham has spiritual impact, and Lot does not.

Therefore, we will next examine the concept of a **client nation** and the pivot, and relate this all back to Abraham and Lot.

We have been studying Genesis 18, which speaks of a **corporate judgement** that God is about to lay upon 5 cities, including Sodom and Gomorrah. Believers tend to become confused when the Word of God extends beyond their individual Christian life. They do not understand that God does not just deal with them as individuals, but God deals with corporate entities—groups of people who are gathered together into a church, or as an organization, a business, a military force or a city, state or nation.

First of all, Sodom and Gomorrah are not client nations. However, in order to take what we are studying in Sodom and Gomorrah, we first need to understand what a client nation is. The term *client nation* was coined by R. B. Thieme, Jr., who coined a lot of new terms for Christian doctrines. Because he coined this term, I will attempt to be faithful to what he taught about the client nation.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of a Client Nation

1. Definition of a client nation: a client nation is a national entity wherein Christianity is thriving. Those within the nation are evangelizing and sending out missionaries, as defined in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19). A significant portion of the population are believers in Jesus Christ and a significant percentage of those are mature or maturing believers. God has a relationship with the corporate body of that nation and God uses that nation in a number of ways.
2. I believe that R. B. Thieme, Jr. came up with the term client nation, because there was no real acceptable definition for the term *Christian nation*.
 - 1) Over the years, many theological and semi-theological words have had their meaning fouled through continual misuse.
 - 2) Many understand *client nation* and *Christian nation* to be synonymous term. By that definition, the

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- United States is a Christian nation.
- 3) Some believe that nation is a Christian nation because Christianity is the dominant form of religion there. This would indicate that the United States is a Christian nation.
 - 4) Unfortunately, too many people associate the term **Christian nation** with a national entity that has established a national “Christian” church or makes religious requirements of its citizens. If a nation of Christians persecutes non-Christians (within or without that nation), then that is completely wrong and out of step with God’s plan. Let me caveat that with, there are times when it is reasonable and in the will of God for a nation of mostly Christians to go to war with, say, an Islamic nation.
3. The concept of a client nation comes from God’s function in the nation Israel; the concept of a corporate relationship with God; New Testament principles, such as those found in Romans 13; and a history of such nations since the fall of Israel in A.D. 70. Essentially the truth of several doctrines are combined to come up with the concept of a client nation.
- 1) God deals with individuals and with corporate entities. God obviously deals with Abraham as an individual; and He dealt with Moses as an individual. However, the corporate identities were also recognized and dealt with by God. Abraham’s army was prospered by God in **Genesis 14** in what was possibly the greatest military upset in human history. In the context of this tangent we are on, God is dealing with Sodom and Gomorrah as corporate entities. God deals with churches as corporate entities in Revelation 2–3. The saying, “No man is an island;” is actually a true principle.
 - 2) As we have already studied, nations in the time of Abraham and before were obsessed with developing a **moral set of laws** with which to govern. These laws were similar in many ways to the Mosaic Law. We would expect this of men who are not too far removed from creation. We would expect them to come up with laws that would have a lot in common with the **laws of divine establishment**.
 - 3) That Abraham has a correct understanding of right and wrong was discussed thoroughly when we exegeted **Gen 18:19 For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., his descendants] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [guarded, protected, preserved] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers of that era] to do righteousness [the principle of God’s integrity] and justice [the function or execution of God’s integrity], to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him.** Therefore, it is reasonable that there were various men at various times who also had concepts of right and wrong, which they used in ruling nations.
 - 4) Abraham will develop a relationship with ancient Philistia (which is probably not the same group of people who later settled in that same area); and it will be clear that they are concerned with doing what is right.
 - 5) In the midst of all these nations, God created Israel from Abraham’s progeny (this is the story of Exodus through Joshua). For 1400 years, God will work within and through the nation Israel, which indicates again that God both relates to and uses corporate entities.
 - 6) As we will later study, Abraham does not simply declare Palestine as his land, and go from there. God waits for the proper time. He even told Abraham that **the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full** (Genesis 15:16); so God looks at the Amorites (and others in the land) as a corporate body. The land is not just given over to descendants of Abraham; the iniquity of those in the land has to reach a saturation point, and then God will allow those peoples to be destroyed (this is the Old Testament vengeful God you have heard so much about, but possibly never understood).
 - 7) Israel, in several incarnations (as united Israel, and later as a kingdom divided into Israel and Judah) was a client nation to God through which God worked. Within the nation Israel, salvation and Christology was taught (Genesis 15:6 Exodus 12:6–7 Leviticus 1–6); and missionaries were

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- sent out (the book of Jonah; and some people came to Israel for wisdom (Bible doctrine—1Kings 10). This corporate relationship is summed up with the phrase, “**They will be My people and I will be their God.**” (Jer. 32:38; see also Deut. 26:17–19 Jer. 24:7 30:22).
- 8) Some of the laws that God designed for Israel are universal, e.g the Ten Commandments (with the exception of the 4th commandment). The ceremonial laws were designed to reveal the Savior (the various sacrifices) during the dispensation of Israel. And some laws were designed to simply to keep the Jewish race healthy and prosperous.
 - 9) With the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the establishment of the local Christian church and a new set of doctrines for the Church Age, it became clear that God was no longer working through the nation Israel, as it had been conquered and many of the unbelieving Jews had been expelled or killed.
 - 10) It is logical that God will continue to work through corporate entities after the fall of Jerusalem, including through national entities.
 - 11) It is logical to assume that God would bless some national entities and curse others.
 - 12) Rome, which began as being very anti-Christian, eventually became a client nation, which is what preserved the Roman empire for such a long time.
 - 13) Believers were not to become politically active demanding change within a nation. As we already studied in Romans 13, Paul laid down a series of principles concerning the believer’s relationship to the national entity in which he lives, and these principles were the antithesis of revolution. God’s plan for believers within a nation is teaching and evangelizing; so God is concerned simply with freedom to teach and to evangelize.
 - 14) Romans 13 was covered in a previous lesson. The idea here is that, governments and authorities are instituted by God and authorized by God. We are to obey those authorities. We are to obey the laws of the land. We are to pay our taxes to whatever national entity that we live in. We are not to be involved in civil action to overthrow an unjust government nor should we engage in any illegal behavior in order to fix unjust laws. Whatever grievances we have need to be addressed lawfully; and these grievances ought not to be the focus of a believer’s life.
 - 15) When Peter says, “**We ought to obey God and not man;**” in context, he is speaking of evangelizing and teaching Bible doctrine. He is not talking about Christians leading a national revolution. Acts 5:29
 - 16) Because of the laws of the land and the authorities over us that law and order are provided for the human race; and law and order allows for Bible teaching and evangelization. The only disobedience that we ought to exhibit is with respect to evangelizing and teaching the Word of God. One could make the case that, if a law requires us to sin, we should not obey that law (although, we have to be careful in the application of this principle).
 - 17) The Roman empire, as a client nation, arose organically, not as a concerted effort on the part of Christians trying to impose some sort of Christian government, but as a result of believers growing and evangelizing. Nowhere in the Bible are we ordered to make our own nation into a client nation to God. It either is or it isn’t it either happens or it does not. We are mandated to **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ** (2Peter 3:18).
4. The general characteristics of a client nation (which characteristics are true in varying degrees):
 - 1) The Gentile client nation to God is not a Christian nation, in the sense of Christianity being imposed by the government or being an arm of the government. A Gentile client nation is a national entity in which civil government recognizes, to some degree, **divine establishment principles** (or see the lengthier **Doctrine of Divine Establishment (HTML) (PDF)**). This is summarized in Rom 13:1-10 and codices #1 and #3 of the Mosaic Law (codex #1 = the Ten Commandments and

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- codex #3 are the civil laws found in the books of Moses).
- 2) Therefore, people are afforded freedom of religion, thought, speech, association and movement. As a result, there is some respect for individual privacy, property and life; and that the national entity preserves these things.
 - 3) The government respects and even encourages the divine institutions of freedom, work, marriage between a man and a woman, and family.
 - 4) Christianity is allowed freedom to operate within that national entity. Believers can assemble and worship; the Bible can be taught; and open evangelization can take place.
 - 5) A client nation will have a significant number of believers in it, but the government cannot persecute believers. Rome was not a client nation when Christianity began, but it became a client nation. As Tertullian wrote of Christians in his time: "We are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all the places that belong to you -- cities, islands, forts, towns, exchanges; the military camps themselves, tribes, town councils, the palace, the senate, the market-place; we have left you nothing but your temples."
 - 6) A client nation cannot coerce people to become members of any church. Believing in Jesus Christ is a free will choice; it cannot be imposed by parents, by any organization or by the state. Lest you get weird about this, parents should evangelize their children and even require them to go to church; however, children may still rebel against the God Who made them.
 - 7) The function of evangelism occurs freely within the client nation. There are those with the spiritual gift of evangelism who will speak to groups of people, the pastor-teacher who will teach the gospel within the church; individual believers who will personally witness for Jesus Christ; and there will be literature available containing the gospel of Jesus Christ. When giving the gospel, believers need to respect the privacy and free will of the hearers. We should communicate the gospel clearly. It is the Holy Spirit that works within the person, not any sort of coercion, social pressure, emotional blackmail, begging, pleading or demanding which will cause the person to believe in Jesus Christ. Even asking for some sort of physical movement like walking forward, raising one's hand is not a part of the gospel message and can confuse the issue.
 - 8) Autonomous local churches are allowed to operate without government interference.
 - 9) There is consistent, accurate teaching from the Word of God. This teaching should be based upon the Bible, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the mechanics of the spiritual life, and dispensational teaching.
 - 10) Christian scholarship will be a hallmark of a client nation.
 - 11) From the home base of a client nation, Christian churches will send out missionaries. These missionaries should function while understanding and respecting the indigenous principle (that we teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and Bible doctrine, but that the end game is setting up local churches teaching the Bible by local pastors). Missionaries must avoid interfering in the political activities of foreign governments. No missionary should be teaching politics from the pulpit. They should not be advocates for democracy (or any other form of government), regime change, or portray the current government in a negative light. They are to evangelize and teach the truth of the Word of God.
5. Politics, the believer and the client nation:
- 1) Obviously, it is better to live in a nation blessed by God. It is better to live in a client nation to God than, say, an Islamic nation.
 - 2) However, our focus and our drive should always be spiritual growth, not *fixing* our nation.
 - 3) God does not order believers to leave their nation for a better nation. Now, this may occur in some circumstances; particularly if the nation interferes with spiritual growth and evangelization.

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- 4) However, the believer is not called to political action or revolution.
 - 5) Some believers will be politicians just like some believers will be chefs, bicycle messengers, and janitors. Some believers will be political commentators, political writers, just like some believers will be truck drivers, policemen and soldiers.
 - 6) No matter what your vocation is, all believers are in full-time Christian service and, therefore, all believers need to grow spiritually. That spiritual growth is generally going to occur within a church. God specifically designed local churches for this era and He works through local churches much the same way He worked through Israel.
 - 7) The thrust of our lives needs to be a spiritual thrust not a political one.
 - 8) No group of believers will ever establish heaven on earth. No group of believers will change a nation from being evil to being good through political action.
 - 9) We could establish the best political system in the world, and this could be lost almost overnight if the next generation to rise up rejects Jesus Christ and rejects Bible doctrine. The key to corporate blessing from God is the spiritual lives of the corporate entity, not the political system in which they live.
 - 10) Because we live in a democracy, we as believers should do our civic duty and understand the issues and how they relate to the laws of divine establishment. Whatever lines up with the laws of divine establishment, we vote for; whatever does not, we vote against. However, just voting, when you do not know any of the issues is not your civic duty. Obviously, with everything going on, you may not have time to work, tend to your spouse and family, tend to your spiritual life and also be politically aware. Then find an organization which lines up with the laws of divine establishment which makes political recommendations and follow their recommendations. However, a word of warning: such information should not be available in your church. If you are in a church that is politically active and stresses political action, then you are in the wrong church. Let me caveat that with, some churches will use politics in order to make illustrations (which I do) and will, simply because of their size, have a limited political involvement (it seems like the Saddleback Church had both presidential candidates in 2008 to be quizzed by their pastor). This is not necessarily a misuse of the church, if the bulk of the church time is spend on learning and applying the Word of God. In other words, in our country, because it is a democracy, will occasionally deal with politics and political themes. Where it crosses the line is when that becomes the thrust of the church.
6. In short, a client nation is a nation with a concentrated population of believers, a significant portion of which are maturing or are mature. There is freedom within that nation to evangelize within and without; and freedom to teach the Word of God. Because of the concentration of believers, there will be respect for the divine institutions of freedom, work, marriage, and family.
 7. Just as no believer is perfect, no client nation is perfect.

A more complete **Doctrine of the Client Nation** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

Probably the most complete written dissertation on this topic may be found here:

<http://kukis.org/Doctrines/clientnation.htm>

MP3 files from Berachah Church on this topic:

<http://rbthieme.org/mp3audiospecials.html>

Robert McLaughlin teaches this doctrine as a 7 part series, the MP3's files can be found here:

<http://www.gbible.org/?proc=srch&scrit=client+nation&cat=0>

An approach to this doctrine for younger children is found here:

http://allaboardgodstrain.org/files/pdf/A_Client_Nation.pdf This is quite helpful if you teach a Sunday School class.

Other sources for information on this doctrine:

<http://www.doctrinalstudies.com/pdf/D081021.pdf>

<http://www.doctrinalstudies.com/pdf/D100928.pdf>

<http://www.doctrinalstudies.com/pdf/D090908.pdf>

<http://nowewont.ning.com/forum/topics/the-client-nation>

<http://gtbm.org/prayer.php?date=2009-09-13>

This vocabulary is spreading even to Baptist churches:

http://www.faith-baptist-church.info/sermon02_1_2009.htm

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The next doctrine simply follows the history of client nations from the 18th century into the present. It will help to know the definition of the *pivot*. **The *pivot* refers to the number of mature believers who live in a client nation or under civil government in a specific geographical location.** This terminology is original with R. B. Thieme, Jr.

(This portion came almost directly from R. B. Thieme, Jr. notes). This is simply so that you can see how the history of late western civilization synced up with various concentrations of believers in Jesus Christ.

Bear in mind that, few courses in history ever deal with the impact of Christianity; or, they teach Christianity as being synonymous with Catholicism during the worst periods of the Catholic church. **Their understanding is darkened, and they are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart** (Ephesians 4:18). For this reason, you should never expect a heathen history professor to understand or teach the impact of Christianity.

The History of Client Nations from the 18th Century to the Present

1. In modern history, the 18th century was one of the greatest periods of radical change. It began with the death of Louis XIV in 1715, and terminated with the Congress of Vienna in 1815.
2. This century cannot be understood from a Christian perspective apart from Louis XIV, whose reign and policy in the 17th century shaped the course of Europe for over 100 years, and the course of everything, including the industrial revolution down to this moment.
 - 1) Louis XIV was called the Sun King. He was a very arrogant person. He ruled France under the concept: "I am the State."
 - 2) Louis XIV was a rabid advocate of the divine right of kings. It was he who first wrote, "kings are absolute lords. To them belong, naturally, the full and free disposal of all property of their subjects, whether they be churchmen or laymen." He also said, "God has given kings to men and He has willed that they alone should review their conduct." Today, he would be known as an absolute

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statist, a sovereign ruler wherein all that the state lays claim to is the state's. Even though this is common in communist, socialist and other totalitarian forms of government, we had this with our current president (Barack Obama, with the aid of Congress), which nationalized nearly \$1 trillion of student loans, one car company, and set the stage for the nationalization of healthcare. It apparently never occurred to President Obama or to the Congress that assuming control of the student loan business was wrong or immoral. Prior to this, housing loans were essentially nationalized during the presidency of George W. Bush, which created one of the worst economic bubbles in our nation's history. My point is that political leaders and political entities often seize greater and greater power, they are operating under power lust, as Louis XIV did.

- 3) Louis XIV ruled for half a century, from 1643 to 1715. He not only impoverished France through many arrogant, useless wars, but in 1685 he did one thing that changed the course of history and brought in the Anglo-Saxon pivot (a national or regional concentration of believers who impact the direction of a nation or group of nations—this will be more carefully defined in a later lesson).
 - 4) In 1685, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes. Up to that point, France had been a client nation due to the presence of the Huguenots, the French Calvinists who, as the middle class, had brought phenomenal prosperity to France.
 - 5) But in his terrible arrogance, Louis renounced the Edict of Nantes and began a persecution. Those Huguenots who were not killed left France for several places: Prussia, which became a client nation; Holland, for the Dutch Republic was a client nation; England; and the United States. Charleston, South Carolina was the home of the Huguenots in America; from there they branched out through the Carolinas.
 - 6) As believers are persecuted and leave France, we should expect France to suffer nationally as a result. Similarly, two centuries before this, Spain went from being one of the dominant nations on this earth to a third rate nation when it began to persecute the Jews during the crusades.
3. The Reformation was another major factor in the development of the 18th century pivot. In effect, it began in 1517 when Martin Luther published 95 theses and nailed them to the door of the castle church at Wittenberg. That was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, out of which came new pivots (geographical concentrations of believers, maturing believers, and mature believers) and new client nations:
- 1) The pivot in the Netherlands resulted in the rise of the Dutch Republic,
 - 2) The pivot in France was made up of the Huguenots,
 - 3) The pivot in Sweden thrived under Gustavus Adolphus,
 - 4) The pivot in northern Germany under Frederick William the Great Elector,
 - 5) And the pivot in England under Cromwell and the wonderful protectorate he provided which was continued under the rule of William and Mary of Orange.
4. The English colonies saw the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon pivot in this hemisphere. To this day, the pivot has only existed in our northern hemisphere; it has never existed south of the Rio Grande.
5. So the 18th century was a cauldron, a time of great wars, the rise of great generals, great battles, and it was all terminated by the Treaty of Utrecht.
- 1) In America, the War of Spanish Succession was called Queen Anne's War; it made a definite contribution to the beginning of our fantastic client nation.
 - 2) From the War of Austrian Succession, great leaders emerged, like Frederick the Great; in America it was called the King George's War.
 - 3) The Seven Years War was here called the French and Indian War.
 - 4) The French Revolution terminated with the rise of Napoleon.
 - 5) All these wars made fantastic contributions to history, not only militarily, but also to the rise of the

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Renaissance and the beginning of the industrial revolution.

6. The 18th century saw the beginning of inventions which began the industrial revolution. Hargraves invented the spinning jenny, Cartwright the power loom, James Watt the steam engine.
7. In 1730, at Oxford University, three men held a prayer meeting: John and Charles Wesley and George Whitfield, from which grew a fantastic pivot (Matthew 18:20). As a result, the 18th century was the beginning of client nations from a great pivot of mature believers in England, the United States, northern Germany, and Holland.
8. The 18th century ended dramatically with the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and a new map of Europe emerged under Metternich. Russia received Poland, Finland, and Bessarabia; Sweden got Norway; Belgium and the Dutch provinces tried to unite into one kingdom (which didn't work) called the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Prussia received half of Saxony, part of the Rhineland; Austria was given the eastern side of the Adriatic: Lombardy, Venetia, and upper Italy. Russia, Prussia and Austria formed the "Holy Alliance," one of the greatest threats ever. For under the command of Alexander of Russia, this Holy Alliance planned to invade the United States, which would have been disastrous!
9. Out of this great 18th century pivot came the beginning of the greatest missionary activity of all time, with such missionaries as William Carey, Henry Martin, Reginald Hebert, Adoniram Judson, John Scutter in India, Robert Morrison, Dr. Nevius, Hudson Taylor, Peter Parket in China, Dr. James Hepburn, Samuel Brown, Gido Werbecht, Capt L.L. James in Japan, Dr. H.G. Underwood and John Ross in Korea, Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons, Dr. C.W. Van Dyke and Eli Smith in Beirut; Keith Falconder and Samuel Zweemer in Arabia; Robert Moffat, John Crop, John Redman, Alexander McKay, Thomas McComer, George Grenville, Henry Rich, Adolphus Good, Mary Schlessler and Samuel Crowthar and Livingston all in Africa, Capt Allen Gardner in Tierra Del Fuego, David Trumball and H.B. Pratt in Columbia, and L.L. Legters in Mexico.
10. First came the wars, then the pivots, then the missionaries. The wars readjusted history, setting the stage for missionary thrusts. The French lost India to the British. With British rule came the missionaries. The same occurred in Africa. Those nations who succeeded in controlling parts of Africa sent some of the greatest missionaries in history.
11. This same 18th century saw great changes in culture and the arts. In the field of music came Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart. Great artists included Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, Goya, and Hogarth. Great writers included Alexander Pope, who became the exponent of neoclassicism in English literature, Adam Smith, Edward Gibbon, John Boswell, and Oliver Goldsmith.
12. All the 18th century's cultural, spiritual, and historical changes pointed to one great pivot. The so-called "holy club of Oxford" started it all.
 - 1) From George Whitfield came Selenas Countess Huntington; the Moravian Brethren were under Count Zinzendorf; Spangenberg went to Pennsylvania; Dober and Nichemann went to St. Thomas, and Christian David went to Greenland. Augustus Montague Toplady became one of the great men involved in that pivot of 1740-1778.
 - 2) Others included John Newton, William Calper, John and Isaac Milner, Henry Venn, Hannah Moore, Robert Rakes, John Howard, William Wilburforce, Grenville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, William Carey, Henry Martin, and Robert Morrison.
 - 3) Though these are all just names to you, in God's books, these are the great men of history! Some came close but missed the boat, e.g., Immanuel Kant. He was so close, yet he failed.
13. The Holy Alliance and the Monroe doctrine.
 - 1) During the Congress of Vienna, Metternich authored a League of Nations in Europe. It was led by Czar Alexander of Russia, Emperor Francis I of Austria, King Frederick William III of Prussia, and later Ferdinand VII of Spain was added, making it a quadruple alliance. It formed one of the

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- greatest attacks this hemisphere has ever sustained.
- 2) The objective of this League was the maintenance of the Catholic religion plus peace and order in Europe. However, this occurred during the time of absolute monarchies and the suppression of all political freedoms.
 - 3) One of the agenda items of the Holy Alliance was to retrieve the colonies Spain had lost, and therefore to invade this hemisphere. At that time, James Monroe was our President. His Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, was one of the best in our history.
 - 4) On behalf of President Monroe, Adams wrote an answer to that invasion before it began: "If the Holy Alliance subdues Spanish America, the ultimate result of the undertaking will be not to set up a standard of Spain, but to portion out this continent for themselves."
 - 5) So Adams recognized immediately the evil that would come out of this. For example, Russia might have taken California, Peru, and Chile, and the Pacific Ocean would have become a Russian lake.
 - 6) This crisis resulted in a speech given to Congress by President Monroe on 2 December 1823, written by John Quincy Adams. "We owe it, therefore, to candor, and to amicable relationships existing between the United States and European powers, to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." In other words, "you invade any of these areas and we will fight!" As a result, they never invaded.
 - 7) The result was that, in this hemisphere, there were fifteen independent republics involving fifteen million people which emerged from the ruins of the Spanish Empire, to include: Colombia, Venezuela, Equador, Panama, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, etc. Prior to this Monroe doctrine, in September 1821, Czar Alexander of Russia had claimed the entire Pacific coast for the Russians, for he planned to take over this hemisphere.
 - 8) The Monroe doctrine is the last time the United States has had a clear foreign policy. That policy made it possible for this hemisphere to remain in a state of semi-isolation, so that not only could a pivot be formed, but also so that millions of people throughout the world could find eternal salvation through faith in Christ. For we sent out more missionaries than anyone in the world, with the exception of England. And we developed a fantastic pivot in this country! So that the Anglo-Saxon pivot eventually received its strength from the United States of America.

Some of this material came from notes were taken by Cvengr and posted here:

<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/2176118/posts> (c) 1989, by R. B. Thieme, Jr. All rights reserved. Nearly all of point 4 was taken from this source. See this post for additional information on these doctrines of the client nation and the pivot. One of the areas in which R. B. Thieme, Jr. excelled in was history; particularly ancient history.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

At this point, we are still on a tangent, defining several terms which have been used in this study of Genesis, but barely explained. God gave us a 1000+ page Bible because His plan is rather complex (salvation is moderately simple, as are the basic spiritual skills, but there is more to the Christian life than just those things). As believers, we have personal responsibilities before God and we have corporate responsibilities before God, and these are different. Same God, but we have different roles. This should not be difficult to understand. If you are a teacher or an employer, and you have young people that you teach or employ, your relationship to them is different than the relationship that you have to your own children. What many people do not understand (or refuse to understand) is that our individual responsibilities are different from our corporate responsibilities. You cannot take your individual responsibilities, toward your aging parents for instance, and treat that as a corporate responsibility, thus relieving you of your personal responsibility. That is, when your aging parents are in need, you do not think

that is the government's responsibility. The same thing is true of a child that you sire; it is not the government's responsibility to raise that child, it is your individual responsibility. When it comes to the spiritual growth of your children, that is your responsibility, not the responsibility of the local church. The local church can augment your spiritual teaching but it cannot replace it.

One of the great confusions of modern liberals is, they both attempt to make the state into a god and they attempt to replace areas of personal responsibility with corporate responsibility. As we study these topics, this statement will become more intelligible.

We will return to Genesis 18 shortly. God will deal with Sodom and Gomorrah as a corporate entity, so that it is important that we understand what that means and the ramifications of God's relationship to corporate entities. God deals with a local church as a corporate entity; He deals with your neighborhood, your city and your state as corporate entities.

The key to God's relationship with a corporate entity is the pivot within that entity. This can be any sort of a corporate entity: a school, a local church, a business, a military unit, a nation, a city, a neighborhood; but the pivot is key to how God deals with that corporate entity. We defined the concept of a pivot earlier, but need to go into a lot more detail on it.

The way God deals with a national entity is based upon the believers within that nation. The key to God's blessing for any nation is the number of mature believers found within that entity.

Doctrine of the Pivot

1. Definition of the pivot.
 - 1) The *pivot* is defined as the number of mature believers who live in a client nation or under civil government in a specific geographical location. This terminology is original with R. B. Thieme, Jr.
 - 2) Although a pivot is primarily composed of mature believers, it may also include those positive believers whose positive volition toward the Word of God is moving them towards spiritual adulthood (as we have **previously studied**, being in fellowship and learning the Word of God is the basis for our spiritual growth—2Peter 3:18).
 - 3) There is a distinction to be made between the believers in the pivot as opposed to those believers who live in **cosmic system** (which is Satan's organized strategy to rule the world), whose souls are filled with arrogance and self-righteousness.
 - (1) As an aside, *kósmos* (κόσμος) [pronounced *KOSS-moss*], means *world, world order, arrangement, order, organized world system*. Strong's #2889.
 - (2) *Kósmos* would be used in contrast with the word *chaos*, which means disorder.
 - (3) *Kósmos* can be used to describe a system of order independent of faith in Christ, as well as for a system of thinking based upon faith in Christ.
 - (4) Believers in the cosmic system are often recognized by their self-righteousness, their distortion of the Word of God, and by their disorientation to reality.
 - (5) As the pivot shrinks, there is an emphasis on dependence upon the government, as well as a call to social action and civil disobedience, particularly when advocated and practiced by believers. I personally witnessed this in a Methodist church which had pamphlets that advocated for an end to apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia back in the 1970's. Not only had they left their first love (Jesus Christ—Revelation 2:4) but they were so far afield as to corporately advocate for evil.
 - (6) There is an article written by **Joe Phelps**, who is an example—at least in this article—of a

person who has the wrong emphasis. There is no emphasis upon being born-again through faith in Christ; but the emphasis is upon social action and the article referenced attempts to draw parallels between God freeing the Jewish slaves and the Occupy Wall Street movement. I have no idea about the rest of this person's theology; I just know that this particular set of opinions is confused and way wrong.

- 4) As a part of the pivot, growing believers influence the nation spiritually. All believers have civic responsibilities, which are a part of the **laws of divine establishment** (which we studied in **Romans 13:1-10**).
- 5) The laws of divine establishment are principles and laws which are designed for nations of believers and unbelievers alike. We have previously **studied** these laws. These are principles which preserve and prosper a national entity. These laws are every bit as true as the law of gravity.
- 6) Christianity cannot be a state-sponsored religion. This is because, apart from a person's free will, Christianity means nothing. That is, we must actually choose, at some point in time, to believe in Jesus Christ, of our own uncoerced volition. However, at the same time, government officials who believe in Jesus Christ should be allowed to express themselves. Furthermore, faith in God and religious symbols related to the culture of a nation need not be hidden or only allowed to be found in private institutions. In our government, the first amendment constrains Congress with respect to making laws which limit religious thought and expression. The first amendment was never designed to limit individuals (or government entities) expressing their faith (which is how it has been twisted).
- 7) Some religions—particularly Islam—attempt to control the nation and the individuals in the nation with regards to their religious convictions. This explains why Islamic nations need strong and ruthless leaders, because their people could not be controlled apart from such leadership. You cannot have a nation of people inspired by Satan (for Satan is the father of religion—Matthew 13:38 John 8:41, 44 Acts 13:10) without having strong authoritarian controls on these people. Such countries wander a long distance from the laws of divine establishment and only individuals who are strong and even ruthless can govern such a population.
- 8) The church needs to be able to function freely and independently of government interference, including advocacy, sponsorship or enmity. It is legitimate for the pastor to use politics to illustrate some Christian principles; however, when a church simply advocates for certain candidates or for a certain party, it has gone far outside of its boundaries. It is not up to the state to correct this church; it is up to the people of that church to correct that problem. The influence of the church must be first and foremost spiritual (which does not mean other-worldly). In the teaching of the Word of God, there will be applications to life and illustrations from the world.
 - (1) As a distinction, in the early 1970's, a church may use South Africa or Rhodesia as illustrations of nations who, at that time understood and functioned under the laws of divine establishment; but that same church would not have "get involved" pamphlets to change what is going on in those nations.
 - (2) The way individual believers in the local church handle this is, they quietly leave that church, they elect a different board of deacons, and/or they elect a new pastor. In any case, if the individual believers cannot get political pamphlets removed from their foyer, then they should leave that church.
- 9) This does not mean that Christians should not serve in government. However, believers in government must obey the laws of divine establishment, and they must never seek to force Christianity on others. People either choose to believe in Jesus Christ or they don't; this cannot be a state-mandated decision (even parents cannot mandate this decision). However, it is legitimate for believers who work in government to express their faith, as our nation was founded primarily by believers in Jesus Christ, who saw no problem with prayers beginning this or that governmental

function. As an aside, you do not pray before this or that function, just in case, or for good luck. Jesus said, “When two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” So, if 2 or 3 (or more people) are praying to God from that same geographical location, then our Lord is there in their midst. This is quite helpful in the function of any government.

- 10) In a client nation, there must be enough freedom for evangelism, conversion, spiritual growth, and missionary activity. These things are key in any nation.
 - 11) There has always been a pivot somewhere in the world, although there has not always been a client nation. Four great pivots were formed in the eighteenth century in Holland, Britain, America, and North Germany. All these pivots were responsible for great missionary activity.
 - 12) One can see by a [map of the British Empire](#) that God greatly blessed England. Their government encouraged missionaries and spiritual work done in the various countries in the British Empire, and, therefore, the British empire became great. The fall of the British empire goes hand-in-hand with their spiritual decline (R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined the phrase, *spinoff*, to refer to believers who retrogress in the spiritual life).
2. The *spinoff* refers to believers who **have left their first love** (Revelation 2:4) and are in a spiritual downward spiral (R. B. Thieme, Jr. calls this **reversionism**). This term means that they *revert* to what they were before. These are saved believers, believers who will spend eternity in heaven, but who have gone astray from the way of God (Psalm 119:176 Matthew 18:12–14 1Peter 2:25). These are believers who spend a great deal of their lives out of fellowship (1John 1:6–7); they do not learn Bible doctrine and they do not grow spiritually. Some knew the Word of God but then began to retrogress in their spiritual lives. In this study, we are viewing such retrogression corporately. *Spinoff* is a term to describe a corporate situation; reversionism can describe individuals or groups of individuals. When a corporate body retrogresses, it is not just one or two believers, but a significant portion of believers who are either not growing or retrogressing from whatever growth stage they were in.
3. The Pivot and the Client Nation.
- 1) A client nation will have a pivot of mature believers, who are the invisible heroes of that nation. They are the salt that preserves this nation (Matthew 5:13—salt, in the ancient world, functioned as a preservative).
 - 2) It is because of these invisible heroes that a nation is prosperous because of the concept of **blessing by association** (Genesis 12:3 22:18 Galatians 3:8). The general public usually does not recognize that they are being blessed by this association. Many times, these believers function behind the scenes. They are called **invisible heroes**, a term coined by R. B. Thieme, Jr.
 - 3) The prosperity and blessing in a client nation does not occur through social activism (civil demonstrations, political movements, environmentalism), but through those believers who execute the plan of God. Believers who execute the plan of God may be far removed from the political activity of a nation. They may or may not vote; they may or may not be involved in politics, they may or may not be involved in any sort of civil activity. They are the **invisible heroes** who help to preserve the nation in which they live.
 - 4) By normal day-to-day spiritual function, mature believers can move a nation of oppression and tyranny to an establishment government. This does not come to pass by social activism, but simply by the spread of Christianity and accurate principles of doctrine being taught. This is what happened, in fact, in the Roman empire. This has occurred in South Korea. This appears to be occurring in Communist China. The growth of the pivot is what changes the nation. Although there are a huge number of believers now in the United States, it is not inconceivable that our client nation status could change in the next 30 or 50 years and for China to become the next client nation to God. I’m not saying that as a prediction; but as to what could happen in the future. The great prosperity and blessing that the United States has received is based upon the pivot of believers within the United States. When these believers begin to spinoff into the cosmic system or into

political activism or into human solutions, then our nation will retrogress.

- 5) Each generation of believers determines the direction of the nation in which they reside. Although one generation can essentially ensure many of the freedoms of the next; that next generation can lose that freedom for itself or for subsequent generations through its actions and thinking (this is explained in the 4 generation *curse* found throughout the Bible).
 - (1) The idea behind the 4 generation curse is, if one generation arises and they do not teach salvation or doctrine to their children, that can result in a 4 generation curse.
 - (2) It is not that subsequent generations are responsible for the wrongdoing of their parents, but that they continue in their own lives to function apart from Jesus Christ.
- 6) A nation with a large pivot of mature believers guarantees the perpetuation of that client nation, despite the many dangers which appear to be on the horizon. Our own nation is a prime example of this. We currently have one of the worst and inexperienced presidents in American history (I write this in 2012); we are on an economic precipice in several ways (our government is running a yearly \$1.4 trillion deficit); we have a large number of people in this nation whose faith is in government rather than in God; and we have vicious and ruthless enemies who seek our destruction (both Communist and Islamic nations). Yet, at this point in time, we are still the most prosperous and blessed nation on earth with the greatest military of this earth. However, this can change. As the pivot shrinks and the spinoff becomes large, the corporate entity of the client nation is negatively affected. The prosperity and blessing which we receive from God could change virtually overnight.
- 7) As the pivot declines, the client nation declines and is eventually destroyed through the administration of the five stages of national discipline described in Leviticus 26 (these are called the **five cycles of discipline** by R. B. Thieme, Jr.).
- 8) A client nation has enough freedom in that nation to provide for extensive evangelism without government interference or federal persecution. From this evangelism comes a cadre for the pivot. But not all believers enter this cadre and execute the plan of God. A good pivot is perhaps 20% of all believers. In other words, it is not unusual for someone to have believed in Jesus Christ and then not to have any clue as to what life is all about. Christians more typically live in a state of confusion rather than one of cognizance after salvation.
- 9) One of the greatest enemies to spiritual influence in a nation are believers in the cosmic system. They become apostate through life in Satan's cosmic system. These apostate believers may even become potential revolutionaries through civil disobedience. They become fanatical crusaders, disrupting the freedom and rights of others through social action. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement are a prime example of believers who got caught up in the cosmic system. What was particularly evil about Martin Luther King, Jr. was, he closely worked with churches in order to achieve his desired social ends. Now, almost all liberals and many conservatives would argue until they are blue in the face that MLK was a great man who did great things. In 2012, the Black family has disintegrated so that 70% of Black babies are born out of wedlock; hundreds of thousands of Black babies are killed in the womb; the unemployment rate and the governmental assistance rate is far higher for Blacks than it is for whites; etc. By nearly any measure, Blacks are far worse off as a sub-group in our population than they ever were. Perhaps you don't know this, but, at one time, Blacks had wonderful family units, that most were believers in Jesus Christ and many were growing spiritually, and that there were times when unemployment among Blacks was *lower* than it was for whites. So the idea that Martin Luther King, Jr. did something great for African-Americans is preposterous. He poisoned Black churches which has led to the soul-poisoning of many African-Americans.
 - (1) You may want to counter and say, well, Blacks were discriminated against and treated badly. Of course, that happened. There was hatred in the souls of some whites and that hatred

- poisoned their own ignorant souls.
- (2) Liberals today, who claim to be the friend and advocate of the Black man are paternalistic toward Blacks. They treat many Blacks as if they are unable to do for themselves; and, because they believe that Blacks cannot control themselves, they make it easy for Blacks to get abortions. In essence, all that liberals do for Blacks is a result of believing Blacks are inherently inferior and need government to give them a boost or a little extra help, even if this means supporting them financially from cradle to grave. After all, in the mind of a liberal, you cannot expect that Blacks will work hard and be responsible; you cannot expect Black women to control their sexual nature; and you cannot expect that Black men will take responsibility for any of their actions. Therefore, government must step in and take up the slack, because Blacks, in the eye of the liberal, are inferior and unable to overcome difficulties and obstacles on their own.
 - (3) So that there is no misunderstanding, the spiritual pivot in the Black community, which was powerful in the 1950's and before, was very much responsible for blessings which the United States received. However, they were led astray by the civil rights movement, which put political change ahead of spiritual dynamics.
4. Jesus teaches the pivot: in speaking to His disciples, Jesus said, **"You are the Salt of the earth; but, if the salt should lose its strength, what will you use to restore its saltiness? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown away, and trampled underfoot."** (Matthew 5:13). Salt was used to preserve food in the ancient world, since refrigerators were in such short supply. The preservation qualities of salt parallel the spiritual growth of the individual. When this spiritual growth loses its power, the nation is no longer preserved.
 5. When God made promises to Abraham, God taught the principle of the pivot and blessing by association. Y^ehowah said to Abraham, **"I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** (Genesis 12:3).
 6. This chapter that we are studying is an example of the preservation of the pivot. God tells Abraham that He is about to destroy these cities, and **Abraham asks, "What if there are 50 righteous men within these cities? Would you still destroy them?" God says that He would not. "Okay, then," Abraham continues, "What if there are only 45 righteous, would you still preserve the city?" "I would," God answers.** So, there is a point at which the number of believers in a geographical area preserve that area; and there is a tipping point after which, there are not enough to preserve that geographical area. Genesis 18:17–33 (which we have not fully exegeted yet)
 7. The History of the Geopolitical Advance of the Pivot.
 - 1) The Dispensation of Israel.
 - (1) The first client nation to God was Israel. The dispensation of Israel was built around four different client nations. Between B.C. 1440 and A.D. 70, God called out a new racial species in order to form the first in a series of Jewish client nations. Blessing was related to those nations. The Old Testament reveals Israel's impact on history.
 - (2) The four different nations were:
 - i The United Kingdom.
 - ii The Northern Kingdom.
 - iii The Southern Kingdom.
 - iv Judah.
 - (3) The administration of the fifth cycle of discipline (the 5th stage of national discipline) to each of the four client nations was as follows.
 - i First of all, the 5th stage of national discipline is the final stage, where the nation is conquered and the people are removed from the land. We already studied this, in a limited way, in **Genesis 14**, where the city-state of Sodom had first suffered the 4th

stage of national discipline (being conquered by a foreign territory and paying tribute to that territory) and was in the midst of the 5th stage of national discipline (being removed from the land of their birth) when Abraham stepped in.

- ii Assyria administered the fifth cycle of discipline to the Northern Kingdom in 721 B.C.
- iii The Chaldeans administered the fifth cycle of discipline to the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C.
- iv The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and completely took over Palestine in A.D. 70. That was the end of all Jewish client nations, and the beginning of the times of the Gentiles.
- v It should be pointed out that these are not the only ways in which God disciplines a client nation. These were specifically the ways that God would deal with client nation Israel between 1440 B.C. and A.D. 70.

2) The Times of the Gentiles.

- (1) During these times of the Gentiles, no Jewish nation can be a client nation to God, not until the Second Advent of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants to Israel.
- (2) The first Gentile client nation to God was S.P.Q.R. (i.e., the Senate and the People of Rome), which we call the Roman Empire. This was the first and in many ways the greatest Gentile client nation to God.
 - i When the Roman Empire reached its peak with a large pivot, there was the golden age of the Antonine Caesars, from A.D. 96 to 192. The historian Gibbon called this period the "golden age of humanity."
 - ii The period of the Antonine Caesars was a time of dictatorship, and yet a time of the most fantastic blessing. This illustrates that the issue is not the type of government, but the pivot of believers.
- (3) Other great Gentile pivots and client nations of the past include the Goths, the Franks, the Swiss under Calvin and Zwingli, Scotland under Patrick, Sweden under Gustavus Adolphus, parts of Germany under Luther, France under the Huguenots, Great Britain, Brandenburg Prussia under Frederick the Great.

8. The Pivot Principle.

- 1) In essence, a small pivot means a declining Gentile client nation. A small pivot means that there are fewer believers being evangelized and fewer believers being brought to spiritual maturity. This is often seen in churches where the congregants are becoming older, but not being replaced by the next generation of believers. There are fewer and fewer young people in the church.
- 2) An enlarged pivot occurs when there is successful evangelism (which we saw in the 1950's with Billy Graham, where thousands came to know Jesus Christ in his revivals). A larger pivot means that more and more believers are being brought to maturity through the accurate teaching of the Word of God. And a growing pivot means a wonderful, prosperous, and blessed client nation.
- 3) It ought to be clear that we live in a wondrously prosperous nation, which would suggest that there is a pivot of mature believers in the United States. However, there are many cracks in the foundation of the United States, which would suggest that this pivot is declining.
- 4) Although there are many churches throughout the United States which teach the Bible accurately, these churches are often small. Evangelical movements are much smaller today than when Billy Graham was actively evangelizing. And, in many churches, the number of young people is declining. This suggests a shrinking pivot.
- 5) The pivot is a remnant of mature believers who live in a client nation. They have advanced through the **three stages of spiritual adulthood**.
- 6) The spinoff is made up of believers who have entered **reversionism** and are living in **Satan's cosmic system**. Negative volition to doctrine and resultant reversionism produces the spinoff.

- 7) When the pivot is too small in any generation, there are great disasters; some are economic, some are natural disasters, some are military-related, and some are terrible governmental policies (which cause people to become very dependent upon government). When the spinoff of cosmic involvement becomes too great, that generation is destroyed. If there is no response to the four stages of national discipline, then God eventually removes that client nation from history. God may use even a more degenerate nation to destroy that which once was a client nation (see Revelation 17-18).
 - 8) England is a great example of a nation which has gone through these various stages. At one time, England—this tiny little nation—ruled over about **a fifth of the world**. The sun never set on the Union Jack (the British flag), because, wherever the sun was, right down below it was a set of nations under the control of the British Empire. Its control and sphere of influence was incredible. And, what was the key? Evangelism and Bible doctrine. And everywhere that England went, they brought to these nations law and order (the laws of divine establishment) and the gospel of Jesus Christ. England was, at one time, the greatest nation in history; and now, it is but a shadow of its former self. One of the other overt manifestations of this fall from grace is, many churches in England are being **converted into mosques**; and many of their churches are nearly empty. Furthermore, **Britain has become a huge nanny state**, providing some people care from **cradle to grave**.
 - 9) When divine judgment falls on a nation, the pivot is secure. The pivot is always preserved, even though it also shares in the difficulties of the disaster. However, unbelievers and reversionists (those who turn away from spiritual growth) are wiped out. This will be clear when we finish Genesis 18 and 19.
 - 10) While the pivot is secure, the spinoff is always destroyed by historical catastrophe. This is how God administers the **sin unto death** to reversionists. Historical disaster separates the pivot from the spinoff.
 - 11) If the pivot is too small and the spinoff is too large, then the nation is destroyed. But if the nation is destroyed, the pivot is preserved through the disaster, as per Genesis 19 and Isa. 28:5-6.
 - 12) By destroying the great spinoff of reversionists, the Lord protects future generations of history from evil, reversionism, apostasy, and tyranny. The spinoff is destroyed so that the nation will have breathing room for future generations.
 - 13) Historical crisis and geographical disaster is the means of cleansing a nation from the spinoff of evil. A great spinoff will destroy a nation unless God intervenes with historical disaster to eliminate that cancer. Either the spinoff must go or the nation must go.
 - 14) The divine destruction of the spinoff is therefore comparable to a national rebound. With the infection of reversionism destroyed, the nation takes on new life and continues.
 - 15) If large enough, the pivot is the means of delivering a nation under discipline, either from or through the historical disaster. The example is Judah in 701 B.C. during the Sennacherib invasion. The consistent ministry of Isaiah turned the tide in Judah. When all the establishment means of deliverance fail, response to Bible teaching is the last hope.
 - 16) If the pivot is large enough, not only is the client nation delivered from historical disaster, but a large pivot of mature believers means great blessing by association to the client nation and to all nations around it.
9. Why is a client nation destroyed? Hosea 4:1-6 explains how. Hos 4:1-6 is perhaps the most lucid of all the passages on the fifth stage of national discipline (here, it is all about the Northern Kingdom) and how a client nation is destroyed.
- 1) Hosea 4:1 **"Hear the doctrine of the Lord, you citizens of Israel, because the Lord has a court case against the citizens of the nation; because there is nothing of doctrine being taught, there is nothing of grace being applied, and there is no knowledge of God in the nation."** This is a call for positive

- volition toward doctrine as taught by prophet and priest.
- 2) Hosea 4:2 "Instead, there is lying and deceiving [a lack of personal virtue], there is both murder and stealing and rape [criminality is rampant], and [there is] unrestrained violence."
 - (1) The rise in criminality comes from two sources: moral and immoral degeneration.
 - (2) The Hebrew idiom "blood reaches out and touches blood" means unrestrained violence.
 - 3) Hosea 4:3 "For this cause, the land shall mourn; consequently, everyone who lives in it shall lose strength along with the animals of the field; both the birds of the sky and the fish of the lakes are taken away." One of the signs of degeneration is cruelty to animals and a reduction in the animal population. Today, many of the famous animal populations of Africa are not found in Africa, but in Texas. This is because the pivot of believers in Africa, many of whom were established by the British Empire, have died off or have become the spinoff.
 - 4) Hosea 4:4 "Yet let no one contend [blame others for the judgment] and let no one impugn God, for you people are like those who contend with the priest [the person who communicated doctrine]." The individual believers of the nation are the ones at fault; you cannot blame God for the spiritual decline of a nation.
 - 5) Hosea 4:5 "Therefore, you have stumbled by day [failure to apply doctrine in the daily life]; furthermore, the prophet will stumble with you by night [apostate teaching in night classes]. Then I will destroy your mother [nation]." The walk of the believer is confused because believers lack the Word of God in their souls.
 - 6) Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge of doctrine. Because you have rejected doctrine, I will reject you from being a priest nation [client nation]; since you have neglected the doctrine of your God, I will neglect your children [next generation was enslaved]." Are the children bearing the brunt of the spiritual defection of their parents? In part, but the children, through evangelization and spiritual growth can turn this around. The problem is, when one generation loses its spiritual power, the next generation is not exposed to the Lord Jesus Christ or to the Word of God. As we will eventually study, in Exodus, there are two generations who left Egypt with Moses. The older generation died the sin unto death in the desert; the young generation defeated the Canaanites in the Land of Promise and took over the Land of Promise. The next 4 books in the Bible are very careful to distinguish between these two generations.
 - 7) The same subject of national disintegration is found in Isa 28:1-13 as well.
 - 8) When the believer fails, the nation fails.
 - 9) When the believer advances to maturity and joins the pivot in any generation, though that pivot will not be recorded in the pages of history, it will be recorded forever in heaven.
 - 10) Part of escrow blessings to a mature believer is personal, national, and international impact. Rev 3:12, "The winner, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God [a permanent historical record in heaven of all mature believers who had an impact on history as a part of the pivot]; furthermore, he will never vanish from history, in fact, I will emblazon on him the title of my God, the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem [coat of arms of winner] which will descend from heaven [satellite city], also from God a new title [new aristocracy for eternity]."
10. The United States of America, a Client Nation.
 - 1) Before it became a nation, the United States of America was already under client nation status as a part of the Anglo-Saxon pivot. As a colony, the United States was already in client nation status.
 - 2) On 4 July 1776, a document was written and unanimously approved: The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen United States of America.

The Declaration of Independence

"When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands

which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to separation.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ...

"But when a long train of abuses, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce us to absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such a government and to provide new guards for their future security . . .

"We therefore acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind: enemies in war, and in peace, friends.

"We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in general congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for rectitude of our intention, do, in the name of and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved of all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved, and that as free and independent states they have the full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent states may have a right to do.

"And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

- 3) From that day on we have been a nation; but before 1776 we were already under client nation status with a 200-year old Anglo-Saxon pivot.
11. What's the status of the pivot today? How stands the United States of America now?
 - 1) We see the same historical trends occurring as in the eighteenth century. Whereas, before, Russia was our greatest enemy, it is now China which keeps us in check because of our ever-shrinking pivot.
 - 2) Popular among fundamentalist Christians today is Christian activism and civil disobedience. We see a decline in interest in Bible doctrine. Therefore, we see a failure to send out the right kind of missionaries, a failure to form a large enough pivot, and disaster will inevitably result.
12. Application to the Believer.
 - 1) There are two things the believer must never do when he is depressed by history.
 - (1) Feel sorry for himself.
 - (2) Justify his nation when its on its way down under divine discipline.
 - 2) The believer takes responsibility for his own decisions. If he makes bad decisions, that contributes to the overall failure of the client nation. The solution, of course, is positive volition toward doctrine, the regular use of confession of sin, and spiritual growth.
13. History of the Pivots.
 - 1) Paul's prayer of Eph 1:15–23 anticipated that Rome would become the first Gentile client nation. As he traveled, he was always attempting to establish a pivot through the gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching of Church Age doctrine. Paul both discovered and helped to establish a great pivot in Ephesus and in the Roman Province of Asia. It was Ephesus that became the "holy city"

for the next few centuries. This motivated Paul's prayer in Eph 1:15–23. Rev 2-3 mentions seven of those churches in Asia which also made up the pivot of the Roman empire.

- (1) However, Paul's prayer is effectual for the pivot as it spreads around the globe throughout the Church Age.
- (2) This first pivot, headquartered in Ephesus, can be called the Aegean pivot as it spread to Greece, Cyprus, Crete, Northern Africa, and Rome.

Paul's prayer for the new pivot in Ephesus (mostly the **Understandable Version** of the New Testament):

Eph 1:15–16 **For this reason also, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of the saints** [believers in Jesus Christ], **I do not stop thanking [God] for you. I keep asking, in my prayers,**
 Eph 1:17 **that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation** [or, "give you the spiritual gifts of wisdom and revelation"], **so you can have full knowledge of God.**
 Note what Paul is praying for; he prays for these Ephesians to have full knowledge of God. In the Greek, this is epignosis (ἐπίγνωσις) doctrine, which is Bible doctrine that has been believed, and is therefore a part of the soul of the believer.

Eph 1:18 **I pray that your minds will be enlightened so that you will know what the hope** [= confidence from knowledge of doctrine] **is, to which God has called you** [we are first called to salvation, and then, after we have believed, into the plan of God], **and what the glorious abundance is** [God has given us great spiritual assets], **of God's inheritance in the saints** [Note: Paul wanted them to appreciate the value God placed on them],
 Eph 1:19–20 **and what God's tremendous power [working] in us believers is** [This power is] **the same as that utilized by God's mighty strength, which He exerted when raising Christ from the dead and seating Him at His right side in the heavenly realms** We have access to the same power that God used to raise Jesus Christ from the dead; we are all in possession of the Holy Spirit.

Eph 1:21 [There He is exalted] **high above all rulers and authorities and powers and dominion and every name that can be given, not only in this present age but [also] in the one to come.** This parallels Romans 13, which we recently studied, where God is the One Who establishes these authorities.

Eph 1:22–23 **And God placed everything in subjection under His [i.e., Christ's] feet, and appointed Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His [spiritual] body. The church is completely filled by Christ, Who completely fills everything in every way.** All things, all authorities and all nations, are subject to the control of Jesus Christ. Hence, the oft repeated phrase, *Jesus Christ controls history.*

- 2) The second pivot was the pivot around the Roman Sea, under the one hundred year reign of the Antonine Caesars (this would be A.D. 96–180). The Mediterranean Sea became a Roman lake.
- 3) A great deal of effort was spent A.D. 100–400 determining what the canon of Scripture was, which suggests to me that this pivot continued, although my personal knowledge of history is weak at this point. The merger of the Catholic church with the Roman empire occurred in 380, which increased the political power of the "church" but reduced its spiritual power considerably. This does not mean that everything associated with the Catholic church was evil. St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, which is the common language of the people, and it is an excellent translation. Problems emerged because of the unholy alliance of church and state; and the Catholic Church began to do just the opposite of what they had done before: they once sponsored bringing the Holy Scriptures into Latin, so that all could read the Bible; and then they later opposed making the Bible available to the common people.
- 4) One of the great pivots was 18th century Western European civilization, as evidenced in the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the four great pivots in Germany, France, Holland, and England.
- 5) Next was the Atlantic pivot of the 19th and 20th centuries.
 - (1) It began with the Age of Discovery and Columbus. Then came the colonization of the western hemisphere, South Africa, other parts of Africa, and India. This was the great period of the

- British Empire, whose influence caused stability throughout the world.
- (2) The core of it all was the Anglo-Saxon pivot, mainly found in England and the United States. Unfortunately, this pivot today is practically non-existent in England.
- 6) In the 21st century, the pivot is still strong in the United States, but there is not much by way of young people replacing the pivot. Some believe that the next great pivot will be found in the Pacific basin.
 - (1) The Pacific was already great at the beginning of this 20th century. It saw one of the greatest revivals ever in Korea in 1905 under Presbyterian missionaries.
 - (2) There is a great deal of evangelism which is taking place in mainland China as well, as well as geographical areas where freedom is encouraged (e.g., Hong Kong).
 - 7) Just as the barbarians invaded the Roman Empire in its decline and were often evangelized, with many becoming strong believers; so today we see the invasion of the peoples of the East, as well as people south of us, coming to the United States to be evangelized.
 - 8) We are obviously spiritually teetering. At times, we lean toward decadent Europe, hoping to follow their failed socialist model; and, at other times, we seem to lean toward freedom and Bible doctrine.
14. The Need for a Pivot.
- 1) The demand for power always exceeds the need for power in human history.
 - (1) In any organization, there's always legitimate power and authority. But the demand always exceeds the need.
 - (2) The slots for legitimate authority requires relatively few people. But outside of legitimate authority is always the arrogant who demand power, who demand to be recognized. This ought to be obvious in our own democracy. If you followed the 2008 presidential race, it should have been clear that well over half of the candidates had no business whatsoever running for president. They had absolutely no executive experience, and the arrogance of most of the candidates was palpable.
 - (3) Many manifestations of arrogance today point to this demand for impact syndrome. When you add arrogance to demand for power, the result is violence.
 - 2) Excess of power beyond the demand results in conflict for power.
 - 3) The conflict for power results in two destructive categories in history.
 - (1) The self-destruction of a nation from enemies within.
 - (2) The overt destruction of a nation from enemies without, i.e., warfare and conquest.
 - 4) The self-destruction of a nation results from several things:
 - (1) A limited amount of evangelism taking place.
 - (2) A lack of believers choosing to move to maturity.
 - (3) A maximum number of wrong decisions from a position of weakness.
 - (4) The arrogance involved in the struggle for power.
 - 5) The overt destruction of a nation results from failure to see the necessity for and the proper support for both the military establishment and law enforcement. Law enforcement is our only protection from enemies within (criminals), and the military is our only protection from enemies without.
 - 6) Inevitably, both overt and self-destructive concepts in a nation can be averted by only one thing, and that is a large pivot of mature believers. No political system, no type of legislation, and no political leader can deliver a client nation on the way down.
 - 7) As goes the believer, so goes the client nation. A large pivot means blessing for the United States; a small pivot means discipline and eventual destruction. We are at a crossroads now, at that point where the survival of this client nation depends on your attitude toward doctrine.
 - 8) There are no tragedies in history. People and nations are the products of their own decisions, good or bad. A good decision as defined by the Scripture is:
 - (1) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- (2) Post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation, i.e., perception, metabolization, and application of the mystery doctrine for the Church Age; which will result in spiritual growth for individual believers.

This doctrine was based in part upon notes were taken by Cvengr and posted here:

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[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

As we complete Genesis 18 and go into Genesis 19, it is always worth asking yourself if you are a part of the pivot or a part of the spinoff.

We have been on quite a tangent for the past 7 or so lessons. The purpose was so that we could have a better understanding of how God deals with mankind corporately. Although Genesis 14 began to set us up for a corporate relationship to God, the latter half of Genesis 18 combined with Genesis 19 marks a dramatic event in human history. The people of a geographical area will become so degenerate that God will destroy them.

Most of us have some sort of understanding of how God deals with us on a one-to-one basis, but few Christians realize that God interacts with corporate entities all the time. In previous lessons, we have seen just what a tremendous influence certain nations have been on the world, and the two most modern examples are England and the United States (whose influence we have already [studied](#)). The key to the great power of these nations is Bible doctrine in the souls of a significant number of their citizens. And as the number of people who are saved and are mature believers decrease, so decreases the power and influence of that nation. England went from being the greatest nation in the history of mankind to being an average European state beset with [radical Muslim problems](#) and near [empty churches](#). England went from being the dominant world power to importing people who would act as the seeds of their internal discipline.

In the past several lessons, we have looked at some specific doctrines related to the nation in which the believer lives and we have examined how God deals with us corporately. During this time, we developed a great deal of vocabulary, which will be reviewed here. The words are linked to a more complete explanation.

Glossary of New Christian Terminology

Term	Definition
Christian nation	This is a term which has been tossed around for years, for which few could give a solid definition. Many understand a Christian nation to be that in which the government encourages and even mandates Christianity among its people. Since such a concept is anti-Biblical because it implies state-interference with free will, a new term needed to be developed.
Client nation	The client nation is a nation where there are a lot of believers and a lot of mature and growing believers. This nation is known for its evangelization, for its Bible teaching, its Bible scholarship, and missionary activity. The government and leaders may or may not be supportive of such activity. However, generally speaking, such activity is allowed within the national entity. It is this activity which preserves such a national entity.

Glossary of New Christian Terminology

Term	Definition
Corporate relationship with God	God does not simply interact with man individually, which is nearly all that is taught at most churches. We have a variety of corporate or group relationships with God: our family, our business, our school, our neighborhood, our city, our state and our country. Just as corporations of men have relationships with other corporations of men, so the various corporate entities to which we belong has a relationship with God.
Dispensations	<p>God divides up human history into large blocks of time, and God has a slightly different program for each block of time. For instance, during the Age of Israel, God worked primarily through the nation Israel—through its kings, judges, prophets and priests, and through His people, the Jews.</p> <p>During the Church Age, spiritual growth usually occurs as a result of the function of the local church. However, God still deals with national entities, like nations, cities, states, geographical areas, businesses, schools, etc.</p>
Laws of divine establishment	<p>These are laws will protect and prosper a nation. Hypothetically speaking, even a nation without Christians could follow the laws of divine establishment (although this would not occur in practice). The five divine institutions (the volition and function of the individual human soul, work, marriage, family and nation) are recognized and protected and there is a system of just laws and equitable enforcement of same. The result is law and order, freedom and prosperity. There is no freedom apart from law and order.</p> <p>The laws of divine establishment should also protect Christian activity, e.g. churches, evangelism, missionary activity, and Christian scholarship). Protection within the nation is provided by law, a police force and the courts; protection from without is provided by a well-trained military force.</p>
Pivot	These are the mature and maturing believers in a geographical or corporate entity. The way that the pivot goes determines the way that the nation goes with respect to its freedom and prosperity.
Spinoff	<p>These are believers who get sucked into the cosmic system (which is the thinking of Satan as over against the thinking of God). A great modern example of this are the civil rights protestors of the 50's and 60's, many of whom began as strong, Bible-believing Christians, but ended up as political and social activists. They achieved their political ends and lost their spiritual impact.</p> <p>A more up-to-date example would be those who have truly exercise faith in Jesus Christ, but then have gotten caught up in political or social action or attend a church which teaches liberation theology (or any other anti-Biblical organization).</p>

Most of these links are internal and will function when the first 200 lessons are posted online.

Several of these vocabulary terms are original with R. B. Thieme, Jr. and he was the first person, in many cases, to develop these concepts categorically.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Now, let me remind you of what has been going on in our study of Genesis. 23 years previous, Abraham and his nephew had a huge livestock business where they had a large mobile cattle ranch. Things were actually quite good economically speaking. In fact, they had so much livestock, that these two men had to separate into two different companies, because they could not easily keep their stock separate (Genesis 13 circa 1891 B.C.). Abraham gave his nephew Lot the choice of which direction to go in, and Lot chose to go south into the Sodom and Gomorrah area.

Sometime later, the Sodom and Gomorrah area was invaded by kings from the east who apparently had some control over this land via subjugation and taxation until there was a rebellion. The kings of the east came to put down this rebellion and they were going to take the inhabitants of this area (which included Lot) into slavery. Abraham, with a very small army, actually defeated these kings from the east, which dramatically changed human history. In fact, this pushed away the strong military influence of the eastern kings for several hundred years.

Abraham returned the people to the King of Sodom and most of their possessions (although some was kept for payment to Abraham's crew). As we will find out, freedom for this people was not necessarily in their best interest, because this is a very degenerate people. This is why they had undergone the 4th stage of national discipline (being conquered and controlled by an outside nation) and were nearly placed under the 5th stage of national discipline (being conquered and then removed from their homeland). The 6th stage of national discipline is the obliteration of a nation or a people. When God laid out these stages for Israel in Leviticus 26, there is no 6th stage of national discipline for the Jews because God will forever protect His people, the Jews.

As an application, freedom and self-governance is not always the best thing for some people. These people will use their freedom for lawlessness and sexual immorality. Freedom demands both authority and self-control. The more a people are unable to regulate their own behavior, the more they require external controls to regulate them. This is why morality is a part of the laws of divine establishment. Giving people freedom and a limited government does not mean that life will be good. Otherwise, countries like the United States would be popping up all over the world. This is why the United States is so unique: we have freedom and most people in the United States have self-control. We have a good balance of freedom and authority in our country, comparatively speaking. When the authority increases (i.e., the power of government), that often suggests that self-regulation of the people is degenerating.

One of the essential principles of our founding fathers was to establish a government for the purpose of insuring personal freedom. Our Declaration of Independence was all about divine establishment: *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. - That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*

Our founding fathers understood that having maximum freedom required personal morality. John Adams: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Charles Carroll, signer of the Declaration of Independence: "Without morals a republic cannot subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion, whose morality

is so sublime and pure (and) which insures to the good eternal happiness, are undermining the solid foundation of morals, the best security for the duration of free governments." Thomas Jefferson: "I never ... believed there was one code of morality for a public and another for a private man."

At this present time, in 2012, we have Muslim nations experiencing the Arab Spring, and most liberals (as well as many conservatives), at the beginning of this were **hopeful** that this would all **result** in Arab democracies occurring all over followed by the establishment of great nations. Many, who paid attention to the Arab Spring, began to back off, and say, *Well, they won't necessarily establish a Jeffersonian democracy right out of the gate.*

However, many Americans misjudged what the Arab Spring was. This is because people have confused notions about a revolution within a country. Many Americans think that this is a good thing; so they were correspondingly hopeful to see all of the revolutions occurring throughout the Muslim world. However, divine establishment requires a balance of freedom, morality, self-control. Muslims are incapable of such things, apart from a warped morality because their religion is Satanically-inspired.

Even people who made excuses for the Arab Spring ("Well, I don't think we should expect a Jeffersonian Democracy to come out of this") did not understand what the problem was. The problem was not the form of government or the leaders who ruled this or that Arab state, but the lack of divine establishment in their land; and the lack of a pivot to influence and stabilize them.

Since the majority of these peoples in the Middle East are Muslims, they require strong external controls to keep them in line. This is why a Muslim country does best if ruled by a ruthless dictator who can come into their home for nearly any reason and arrest and kill an entire family if he so chooses. Their fear of such a ruler is sufficient to keep their worst instincts and behavior in check. This is why we could impose order and controls in Afghanistan and Iraq; because we had soldiers with weapons keeping the peace. Wrong behavior would result in a person's immediate death. However, as the United States pulls out of these countries, **violence escalates**.

In Muslim nations where their leaders are weak, or they lack a well-defined authority due to the "Arab spring", they have been persecuting Christians. They have been **burning down churches** and **neighborhoods**; **threatening** neighborhoods of Christians, **demanding** that Christians self-deport, and **simply** killing **Christians**. This is what we would expect from a Satan-inspired religion (this would be a logical application of Matthew 7:15–20, a passage which contains the phrase, **...by their fruits, you will know them**). This is what we expect when a people like this lack strong external controls.

What is being done here is not a political treatise, but taking the various concepts that we have learned in the past five lessons and applying them to current national and political movements. Good Bible teaching should not inspire political change or move political causes along, but often illustrations from present-day events help to clarify what is being taught in the Bible. God the Holy Spirit uses great events which occurred 4000 years ago in order to teach us certain principles about how God deals with national entities, and this simply applies these same concepts to current events.

I realize that some readers, when Abraham went after the kings of the east with his band of 318 men, possibly internally scoffed at this idea, thinking that this narrative to be part fantasy and part legend. So, how many people live in Israel right now? Nearly 8 million? Now look at what surrounds them: maybe a half billion Muslims who absolutely hate them. There are Muslim grammar schools and even pre-school cartoons which **teach their children to despise Jews** and to desire **to kill Jews**. Kindergarten classes of Palestinians will graduate wearing **Palestinian military uniforms**, their souls filled with **hatred** against the Jews. That is about a 1 to 60 ratio. The

Jews have been attacked on several occasions by alliances of nations which have far exceeded them in population. This is why God will promise the Jews: **And you shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight. And your enemies shall fall by the sword in front of you** (Leviticus 26:7–8, MKJV). At some point, you will begin to correlate historical events with the Word of God, and realize that the Bible is the truth of God; that **the Word of God is alive and powerful**.

As we return to our study of Sodom and Gomorrah, this will be the problem: the people do not have strong external controls, so they have allowed the weakness of their sin natures to be transformed into extreme lawlessness. What will occur in Sodom is described in Romans 1:21, 24, 26–27: **Now they knew who God was, but they did not honor Him as God or thank Him [for their blessings]. Instead they engaged in their useless speculations and their foolish minds were filled with [spiritual] darkness. So, God allowed [or, abandoned] them to have the impure desires of their hearts, and to [practice] degrading behavior with their bodies among themselves. For this reason God allowed [or, abandoned] them to [practice] degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function [i.e., of sex] for what is against nature [i.e., lesbianism]. And men did the same thing, leaving the natural function [i.e., of sex] with women, and burning in their desire for each other. Men committed indecent [sexual] acts with other men [i.e., homosexuality], and [so] brought on themselves the penalty they deserved for this perversion.** (AUV–NT).

Genesis 14 set us up for Genesis 19. When many people read through Genesis 14, they seem to think that these people were simply dealing with some unfortunate circumstances. A stronger power came in, conquered them, and subjugated those in the Sodom valley to paying tribute. This did not just happen for no reason. This happened because God was dealing with this corporate entity. The difficulties that they faced were because their personal morality was eroding. The 4th and 5th stage of national discipline was to get their attention.

We have been, in the past 8 lessons, setting up Genesis 18:16–19:29. God is about to destroy 5 cities and the people who live within them. Therefore, we ought to have some clue as to why this is actually occurring.

A question which might occur to you is, *why these people? Why doesn't God bring them the gospel and save them?*

This brings us to a question asked by believers and unbelievers alike:

Heathenism: What About the People Who Have Never Heard?

1. God is perfect justice. It is impossible for God to be anything but just. **Y^ehowah is righteous and He loves righteousness** (Psalm 11:7b). **I, Y^ehowah, love justice** (Isaiah 61:8a). **God is just** (2Thessalonians 1:6a).
 - 1) As an aside, *righteousness* is the principle of God's integrity; *justice* is the function of God's integrity.
 - 2) For instance, righteousness would condemn sin and justice would punish it.
2. Many believers do not realize it, but it is God's justice which is usually the most important aspect of God to us. In fact, it is justice that is our point of contact with God, rather than love. We can depend upon our salvation because of what Jesus did on the cross; not because of any good thing that we do. Ephesians 2:8–9
 - 1) **He saved us, not because of any good deeds we ourselves had done, but because of His mercy. [He saved us] through the cleansing of new birth** (Titus 3:5a).
 - 2) **"Do not be surprised that I say to you, It is necessary for you to have a second birth."** (John 3:7; BBE).

Heathenism: What About the People Who Have Never Heard?

- 3) "Point of doctrine, and let Me emphasize this, that unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3).
 - 4) Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Romans 4:3 quoting Genesis 15:6; ALT).
 - 5) God presented Jesus as the atoning sacrifice [for our sins] through [our] faith in His blood [i.e., His death on the cross]. This was in order to demonstrate His justice when, by using forbearance, He passed over people's sins in previous generations. [In doing this] God [also] demonstrated His justice [to people] of this present time, that He Himself is just and the One who makes the people right with Him who have faith in Jesus. Where then is the [basis for] boasting [i.e., over being right with God]? There is not any. Is it by [obedience to] a law? Is it by doing certain deeds? Not at all, but by a law of faith (Romans 3:25–27; AUV–NT).
3. Add this to the fact that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to a change of mind [about Jesus] (2Peter 3:9).
 4. People come to God consciousness in all societies, even when the political structure denies God's existence (China, for instance, is filled with believers in Jesus Christ).
 - 1) For a person of normal abilities, somewhere between the age of 3 and, say, 21, come to some knowledge of God. They have a concept of God; they have a limited understanding of a Supreme Being which they think about, but Who they cannot see.
 - 2) God consciousness is often reached by means of information about God (correct or false) from others.
 - 3) Sometimes, God consciousness develops as a result of observation and reason.
 - (1) The cosmological approach: based on human intuition and the law of cause and effect (e.g., Aristotle's "the unmoved mover").
 - (2) The teleological approach: the observed order of the universe demands a planner; the plant and animal kingdoms bear the mark of one designer. Developing a belief in chance or happenstance is the result of negative volition at God consciousness, wherein the thinking devises an alternate system.
 - (3) The anthropological approach: the person learns principles of right and wrong and derives from that the idea of an ultimate source. The Bible calls this, **the conscience bearing witness** (found in Rom.2:14–15, which reads: **For when the [unconverted] Gentiles, who do not have the law of Moses, instinctively practice [some of] its requirements, they become their own lawmakers, even though they do not have the law of Moses. In doing this [i.e., practicing some of the requirements of the law of Moses], they demonstrate that these requirements are written in their hearts. Their conscience tells them this, and their thoughts alternately accuse them [of wrongdoing], or else endorse them [for doing right].**).
 - (4) The ontological approach: the soul develops the concept of the ideal being.
 - (5) God, in some way, will make Himself known to man. Romans 1:18–20 **For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because the thing which may be known of God is clearly revealed within them, for God revealed it to them. For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being realized by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, for them to be without excuse (MKJV).**
 - 4) The knowledge the unbeliever possesses about God extends to the specific attributes of His essence. That is, they may recognize God as being eternal, all-powerful, omniscient, perfect justice, etc. Romans 1:18-20 **For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because the thing which**

Heathenism: What About the People Who Have Never Heard?

may be known of God is clearly revealed within them, for God revealed it to them. For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being realized by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, for them to be without excuse. Psalm 19:1-6 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the expanse proclaims His handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, and he comes forth as a bridegroom from his canopy; he rejoices as a strong man to run a race, going forth from the end of the heavens, and its course is to their ends. And there is nothing hid from its heat.

5. The Bible describes positive volition at God consciousness: **And He has made all nations of men of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth, ordaining fore-appointed seasons and boundaries of their dwelling, to seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and find Him, though indeed He is not far from each one of us** (Acts 17:26–27).
6. If a person reaches God consciousness and is on positive signals (that is, he wants to know more about God); then it is God's responsibility to make sure that this person hears the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because God has stated in His Word that He does not want anyone to perish (2Peter 3:9), we know that God is required to make sure that the gospel gets to this person, no matter who he is, where he lives, or what language he speaks. If God does not do this, then God is not just; and therefore, God is not God.
7. Believing in God is not enough. A person may believe in a Supreme Being soon after reaching God consciousness, but he must believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved. Jesus said, **"You believe in God; believe also in Me."** (John 14:1b). See also John 3:7 17:3 James 2:19
 - 1) Not believing in Jesus Christ is called disobeying the truth in Romans 2:8.
 - 2) Those who do not believe in Him are lost. 1Corinthians 1:18 2Corinthians 4:3–4
8. If a person reaching God consciousness does not want to know Him, then God is not under any legal or moral obligation to provide the gospel for him (although God often does). When a person has negative volition at God consciousness, the gospel is said to be hidden from him. 2Corinthians 4:3–4
9. God does not violate our volition. Acts 14:16
 - 1) Let me add that, God does often exert some natural pressure upon us. This is still respecting our volition. This may be best understood in the relationship between a parent and an adult son. The parent may put some pressure on the son to get him to respond in a particular way (withhold money, not co-sign a loan), but the parent no longer has the overriding volition on that adult son. When I believed in Jesus Christ, I was under some pressure and difficulties; however, many people have been under similar pressures and difficulties and they did not believe in Him. So, just as a parent might exert influence over an adult son in several ways to help guide his son into making a good decision, this influence may or may not result in the son changing his mind about anything.
 - 2) So, we have many instances in the Bible of people being sick and healed by Jesus; or Paul meeting Jesus in the desert. However, in none of these instances did God reach into that person's volition and change him from positive to negative.
10. If a person never reaches God consciousness—because he dies in infancy or his I.Q. is too low to understand the concept of God—then that person is automatically saved, because there is no issue of volition involved. 2Samuel 12:19–23 (where David speaks of his deceased infant, saying, **"He will not come to me; I will go to him."**)
 - 1) As an aside, it is our volition which is key, not how good or how bad we are. You can be born into an environment which has led you into crime, into prostitution, into drug addiction, into homosexuality or into alcoholism—it does not matter. If you throw up these positive signals to God, then God must see to it that you receive the gospel of Jesus Christ (that Christ died for our sins and

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that we may receive eternal life by believing in Him—1Corinthians 15:3 John 3:16, 18).

11. The key to heathenism is not where someone lives or what language they speak, but their volition and God's perfect righteousness. I have heard stories of some Africans walking for days to hear the gospel which was brought to whatever corner of the earth it was that they were living in. How did they find out about a missionary who was speaking? God made certain that those on positive signals were given this opportunity. God made certain that they heard the gospel.
12. Missionaries—good and bad—have gone out all over the earth, to every nook and cranny of this planet, again and again and again. They have learned languages which are known by a few hundred people; and they have given to gospel to such people in their language. And people do respond to the gospel.
 - 1) Let's go back and tie this into what we have already learned: when a **client nation** provides missionaries that go out and give the gospel of Jesus Christ, then God respects and protects that national entity.
 - 2) When a missionary goes out to some remote geographical area, God both protects the missionary and protects the people who respond to the gospel.
 - 3) In the **laws of divine establishment**, we have talked about the importance of nationalism, and this is because God deals with people corporately (as well as individually). When God deals with a group, it is helpful that group is some sort of an independent entity (like a city or state). This allows for an isolate blessing from God to that group.
 - 4) Islam, which wants to establish one nation under sharia law all over the world, would be acting in opposition to God's plan. Internationalists who want to establish one single nation or a government over all nations are acting at cross-purposes with God's plan. Our only true defense against Islam is the gospel of Jesus Christ.
13. The book of Jonah is about missionary activity when Israel was a client nation to God. Assyrians were positive toward God at God consciousness. The Assyrians were hated by the Jews and by Jonah. God told Jonah to go evangelize the Assyrians and Jonah went in the opposite direction. God turned him around, John proclaimed God's judgment to the Assyrians, and, much to his chagrin, the Assyrians believed in his God, Y^ehowah. Jonah was all in favor of God judging these Assyrians harshly; he did not like at all that God forgave them and regenerated them.
 - 1) As an aside, one of the things I worried about as a new believer was being called to the mission field. I had absolutely no interest in this. Those who are pastors, those who are evangelists and those who are called to the mission field make up a small percentage of believers. There are all kinds of spiritual gifts. The spiritual gift (or gifts) given to us by God at salvation is going to be compatible with who we are. God is not going to stick you with some gift that you hate.
 - 2) As another aside, being a successful evangelist has absolutely nothing to do with numbers. That is, Billy Graham of the previous generation may have spoken to millions in his lifetime, and had millions believe in Jesus Christ as a result. He is no more successful than a similarly motivated evangelist today who speaks to hundreds and has a handful of converts every year. God provides the hearers and the venues, and the evangelist and the missionary are to do what God expects of them. If the evangelist faces a crowd of people who were positive at God consciousness but will reject the gospel of Jesus Christ, that is not the responsibility of the evangelist.
 - 3) The same thing is true of the pastor-teacher. You may have a small but relatively faithful congregation of 20 or 30; and there may be a 1000. Your faithfulness in studying and teaching is key; the response of the congregation depends upon their volition.
14. What about the true believer in Buddhism or Islam? Don't they get some sort of credit? Isn't this positive volition toward God? Jesus Christ died for our sins; our righteousness is based 100% upon Jesus Christ; not upon any meritorious thing that we do. We are given God's righteousness based upon our non-

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meritorious faith in His Son. We do not earn salvation; we do not work for salvation; it is a free gift of God. Buddha did not die for our sins; Mohammed did not die for our sins. These men did not represent God; and their teachings which have come down to us do not represent the thinking of God. There is not some sort of a point system and someone who is really dedicated to God (in whatever way that he perceives God to be) is saved. That would be works. Quite obviously, in the teaching of Islam, a really dedicated person might blow himself up along with a dozen innocent people who are near him. This is clearly a work of Satan and not of God (Matthew 7:16). Unbelievers hear a lot of things, and if they are negative toward the gospel of Jesus Christ, they after often drawn into some other false religion. **Go in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in through it. Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves** (Matthew 7:13–15 MKJV).

15. There is also the issue of accuracy in evangelism. Even some of the greatest evangelists do not always get the gospel right. They want those in the audience to raise their hands, to come forward, to be baptized, to ask Jesus into their hearts (which takes Revelation 3:20 completely out of context). None of those things save. We can only be saved by what the Bible teaches us: **Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved** (John 3:16, 18, 36). What often happens is, God the Holy Spirit, despite the confusing things that the evangelist says, makes it clear that we must believe in Jesus Christ. Somehow, in our muddled unsaved mind, we do this, and we are saved.
 - 1) It is the Holy Spirit that convinces us of sin, because we have not believed in Jesus Christ. John 16:8–9
 - 2) The mechanics appear to be that the Holy Spirit acts as our human spirit and reveals to us the truth of the gospel. **For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God** (1Corinthians 2:11 MKJV). **But the natural man [lit., the soulish man] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned** (1Corinthians 2:14 MKJV).
 - 3) Just as our souls help us to understand other people and our environment around us; it is the human spirit which is the storage area for information about God and our relationship to God. The unsaved man (the *soulish man*) is dichotomous, having only a body and a soul (1Corinthians 2:11, 14). The Bible often speaks of the unregenerate as being dead (Ephesians 2:1 Colossians 2:13). What is dead is the human spirit, as unbelievers obviously have functioning bodies and souls. The saved man has a body, soul and spirit (1Thessalonians 5:23). See also Hebrews 4:12
 - 4) Since the first information that we receive about God and our relationship to Him, is the gospel, and since we do not have a human spirit as an unbeliever, the Holy Spirit therefore would act as our human spirit, and reveal the gospel to us.
 - 5) Then part of being born again (or, *born from above*), also called a *new creation*, would be that the human spirit is made alive. John 1:13 3:2–12 2Corinthians 5:17 Galatians 6:15 Titus 3:5 1John 5:1
16. So, a person who has never heard the gospel (and there are very few who have not), is not a heathen because he has not heard, but because he had no interest in God when he developed limited cognizance of Who God is. God's righteousness is not violated for not bringing the gospel to someone who will reject it.

The entire **Doctrine of Heathenism** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Some of this doctrine came from <http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/heathen.html>

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

So far, we have not progressed very far into the second half of Genesis 18, and that is because there are so many doctrines related to what will occur.

In the previous lesson, we looked at the heathen in general and God's relationship to men who have never heard. The reason we are doing this is, God is about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and, it is reasonable to ask, how many of them have heard the gospel? How many of them had the opportunity to believe in the God of Israel? It is likely that Lot was a pretty lousy missionary.

God seems to be holding the people of Sodom responsible for great evil. Therefore, it is only fair to ask, how did those in Sodom know who God was? How did they know even the difference between right and wrong? First of all, there are concepts of right and wrong written on the hearts of men (Romans 2:14–15). And secondly, the people of Sodom knew about Abraham. Abraham and his band of 318 men delivered the people of Sodom from an army so powerful, it had taken control of huge swaths of land throughout Palestine (Genesis 14:5–7). There was a close proximity of the King of Sodom and Abraham and Melchizedek, the priest of God, and their lives all overlapped in Genesis 14. So, the people in Sodom and Gomorrah knew of the power of God. They could have seized upon this opportunity to find out more about Abraham, and, as a result, find out more about his God. They did not choose to do this. Thirdly, it is not a difficult moral precept to understand, you should not do to others what you would not want done to you. The people of Sodom attacked strangers and gang-raped them (homosexual rape) and generally killed them. It does not take a genius to understand that is wrong.

You will recall that Abraham easily came to an agreement with the King of Sodom but that Abraham also had fellowship with the priest Melchizedek. This opportunity was open to all of the people of that area. They had just been thrown into a hopeless situation and Abraham, out of nowhere, delivered them.

This ought to capture your attention. These people have been under pressure for several years, and they were delivered (*saved*, if you will; it is the same word) from a life of human slavery, pain, suffering and hopelessness. That is perfectly analogous to the concept of salvation through faith in Christ. Who delivered them? A man who was a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ (Abraham). A man who placed his trust in God and did the impossible (defeated the armies of the eastern kings' alliance).

And, when it was all over, they even got all of their stuff back. Abraham, who could have kept it all, did not. Don't you think some of them would wonder about how this all happened? Don't you think that some of them would want to express gratitude and possibly get to know why Abraham was motivated to save them. But there is nothing recorded in Scripture, apart from Abraham's meeting with the unnamed King of Sodom, that tells us anything about this people turning themselves around. There is no recorded testimony where a man from Sodom says, "You were motivated by your God to save us and your nephew. Tell me about your God, as we know that your nephew is not much to speak of."

Speaking of Lot, he is one of the best illustrations of God's grace that we can find. He leads what appears to be a worthless life. No one has believed in his God. Even though he holds high political office in Sodom, he is not respected (as we will see in Genesis 19). Let God deliver him first from slavery and then later from destruction. You or I—we might have looked at Lot's sorry spiritual life and thought, "This man is so expendable." But he had two things going for him: he was righteous through faith in Y^howah and Abraham was his uncle. Therefore, God heaped grace upon Lot, far more than we would expect.

Now, we meet this people of Sodom again. It has been about 20 years since God delivered them through Abraham. We know from the circumstances that they were under God's discipline and we will find out that they did not respond to it.

The people of Sodom will become so lawless that they will face the 6th stage of national discipline, which is the destruction of the people of a nation. This stage of discipline is not covered in the warnings to Israel (Leviticus 26 Deut. 28) because God would never destroy all of His Own people, the Jews. The Jews have a future in God's plan, therefore, God has always allowed Jews to live, even though they have faced great periods of suffering. This is why we all personally know Jews today, but we do not know any Amorites, Canaanites or Jebusites.

At the same time that Abraham rescued Lot, Abraham met Melchizedek, which is possibly when the early Scriptures were passed from Melchizedek to Abraham. This would be circa 1884 B.C. (1888 B.C. by someone else's calculation) (Genesis 14). This is the future plot of ground where Jerusalem would be.

Note how differently God will deal with these geographical areas which are side-by-side: God will destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and its people (preserving Lot and his family, a miserable pivot); and Salem will remain somewhat of an independent plot of ground for the next 800 or so years, even though it sits right in the middle of what will become Israel and right next door to the cities God destroys. These people had to have some regard for God, because Melchizedek is a priest in Salem who knows and worships the God of Abraham. This gives these people a pass. God allows this people their freedom and independence for quite some time to follow. Many centuries later, David will conquer Jebus (Salem) and make it his nation's capitol (Jerusalem). But that is nearly a millennium into the future from the time of Abraham.

The events of Genesis 14 were warnings to those in the Sodom/Gomorrah area. They first were under the 4th stage of national discipline, where another country had come in to take them over; and they paid taxes to that national entity (Leviticus 26:23–26). However, because of their rebellion, they were about to go out under the 5th stage of national discipline where an outside power would remove them from the land and, often times, use them as slaves (Leviticus 26:27–33). These events should have served as warnings to this population that their corporate identity was crap before God. At the time that these events took place—when we studied Genesis 14—we did not have any idea *why* they faced the 4th and 5th stages of national discipline. Genesis 18–19 explain why the events of Genesis 14 took place. This people, as a corporate entity, were being warned by God.

As an aside, God deals with nations and specific geographical areas in a variety of ways. There is no reason to think that He follows these exact 6 stages of discipline. For instance, even though paying tribute to an outside nation was common in the ancient world, a geographical area under judgment may be enslaved today to a communist government or to a government attempting to control too many things. Or they may have their resources taken and compensated for, but, without this having a positive impact on the country overall. Or they may live under a tyrant dictator. These would all be analogous to the 4th stage of national discipline. Whenever we get to Leviticus 26, I will lay out these stages of national discipline—which are specific to Israel, but have some application to other nations—and give real-life examples of them.

There is a great contrast between the city-states, Sodom and Salem. They both had freedom and independence, but Sodom used their freedom to become a debauched people, to the point where, they had become dangerous to neighboring kingdoms (this degeneracy appears to have spread across all 5 city-states).

After Genesis 14, a long period of time passes, during which time, Abraham appears to become even more prosperous and Lot's fortune seems to have been dissipated. It is during this time that Abraham has a son by Hagar, but God continues to be faithful to His promises to Abraham (Genesis 15–16).

Then, God suddenly appears to Abraham when he is 99 and promises him that he and Sarah would have a child in the next year (Genesis 17).

Then, God appears to Abraham again, a few months later. Abraham and Sarah were at home and Jesus Christ, in a Preincarnate form, and two angels walked by their place and were called by Abraham to fellowship with him. As they are beginning to go:

Gen 18:17 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do...?"

Having been a teacher, I often would ask questions to students, either individually or as a whole, sometimes to elicit from them what they know; but also, to get them to focus on a particular topic. I may ask Charlie Brown a particular question, but I am hoping that most of the remaining 25 or so students respond in their minds to that question. So, God asks these angels: "Should I keep concealing from Abraham that [which] I am doing? He wants them to focus on this particular question. Then God explains *why Abraham*. Remember, Abraham is just some wealthy guy who has some friends in high places; but he has no real influence in Sodom and Gomorrah. So, apart from his relationship to Lot, angels ought to be thinking about Abraham's relationship to Sodom and Gomorrah and what does his opinion matter. The angels were going to Sodom and Gomorrah to destroy those cities, and Lot and his family lived in Sodom.

The angels knew about Abraham and they knew about Lot. They understood that Lot was spiritually inferior. If it were up to me or to you, or to any of these angels, we might have given little thought to allowing Lot to perish when Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed. However, relationship is everything here. Lot is righteous (he believes in the Revealed God) and Lot has a familial relationship to Abraham. Therefore, God has greater concern for Lot's well being than you or I might have.

Gen 18:17–18 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

You will note the complex array of relationships found here. There is God and the angels; God has come to Abraham with two angels, and these two angels will go on to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Furthermore, there are billions of angels which are observing these events. You have God's personal relationship with Abraham, but God brings up another important factor to be considered: this is not just about Abraham, but Abraham will become a great and mighty nation. Furthermore, the nations of the earth will be blessed because of this great and mighty nation. So there is the corporate relationship that God will have with the nation of Abraham; and there is a corporate relationship that God will have with other nations which are blessed in association with the nation of Israel.

Then there is the regeneration suggested here: Abraham is regenerate and God has pronounced him righteous (Genesis 15:6) and because Abraham will lead a great spiritual life (Genesis 18:19), God will bless him and those who are his seed (Genesis 18:18). What is the ultimate blessing? To be eternally associated with the Person of God. Abraham has that; his seed will have that; and many of those in nation Israel will have that. Many of them will trust in the God of Israel.

We have been actually preparing to study Genesis 18:16–33, where Abraham will intercede for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; and then Genesis 19, where God will destroy these cities (among others).

Before we return to the exegesis of Genesis 18, let's apply some of what we have just learned to recent historical events. In the late 40's and early 50's, we went into Germany, Japan and South Korea and transformed these countries. The former two countries were our enemies in war; they became not only our friends, but two of our

greatest allies. In South Korea, we belatedly decided to try to put a stop to the spread of communism (something which should have been done at Yalta, a few years earlier). Here it is, 60 years later, and these nations are still our allies, and two of them have strong economies while the third has a stalled economy (but previously strong).

More recently, we went into Iraq and Afghanistan and attempted to establish democracies in those countries as well. It does not take a great prophet to look into the future and conclude that, 60 years in the future, these two countries will not be our allies.

What is the difference? In Germany, Japan and South Korea, evangelism and the teaching of the Word of God was a part of our military effort. General Douglas MacArthur, when speaking to a visiting group of evangelicals, asserted that "Japan is a spiritual vacuum. If you do not fill it with Christianity, it will be filled with Communism. Send me 1,000 missionaries." He asked U.S. missionary societies to send "Bibles, Bibles and more Bibles."⁵⁰

Sending Bible and missionaries to war-torn areas like these—even to our enemies—for many years was the automatic response. This is the very essence of a national approach to “turning the other cheek” and “loving your enemies.” What country in the past guided their national enemies to independence and to evangelism and spiritual growth?

As a result of missionaries and Bibles flowing into South Korea, the church in South Korea today is one of the more vigorous in all of the world. Furthermore, North and South Korea stand side-by-side as a testimony to the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Communist North Korea, there is a country of starving people ruled over by a despotic sovereign. In South Korea, where Christianity has become a powerful force, they have a thriving, prospering economy, one of the greatest in the world. Furthermore, they have one of the highest standards of living for Asia.

However, in Iraq and Afghanistan, we chose, instead to *respect* their evil religion, so, at critical times when we had the power to require these nations to provide freedom of religion, we did not. When we had the opportunity to share the gospel with them, the military shut such activity down. Instead of welcoming missionaries and Bibles, the military burned **Bibles in Afghanistan**. Although **missionaries are going to Iraq**, the military is **not encouraging missionary activity**. Therefore, we ought not to expect anything by way of positive outcomes for nation-building. Whereas, we do not necessarily expect our military to subsidize missionary work, it ought not to be hostile toward it either. Nor should soldiers be prevented from sharing the gospel and the Word of God.

The timeline while Lot is living in Sodom looks like this:

The Timeline of Lot Living in Sodom				
Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
		1891 B.C.	Genesis 13:1–4	Abram returns to Bethel in the land of Canaan, returning as a very wealthy man.
		1891 B.C. 1889 B.C. (Klassen)	Genesis 13:5–13	Abram and Lot separate from one another.
			Genesis 13:14–17	God renews His covenant with Abram.

⁵⁰ From <http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/bios/b4macarthurd.htm> accessed August 1, 2012.

The Timeline of Lot Living in Sodom				
Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
		1884 B.C. 1888 B.C. (Klassen)	Genesis 14:5–16	Lot is taken captive. Abram delivers Lot.
		1883 B.C.	Genesis 14:17, 21–24	Abram speaks with the King of Sodom after his victory.
			Genesis 14:18–20	Abram's meeting with Melchizedek.
		1882 B.C.	Genesis 15:1–21	God's covenant with Abram is given in greater detail.
	85	1882 B.C. 1881 B.C. (Klassen)	Genesis 16:1–14	Sarah gives Hagar, her Egyptian slave girl, to Abram in order to sire a son. Gen 16:3 <i>So Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan 10 years.</i>
2078 B.C.	86	1881 B.C.	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 <i>Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.</i>
(2065 B.C.)	99	1868 B.C.	Genesis 17:1–8	God renews His covenant with Abram and renames him Abraham. Gen 17:1 <i>When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be devout.</i>
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:9–14	Circumcision is given as a sign of the covenant and of Abraham's faith in his covenant with God.
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:15–19	Sarai's name is changed to Sarah and Isaac, a future son, is promised the Abraham and Sarah. Gen 17:17 <i>Abraham fell to the ground, laughed, and thought in his heart, "Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?"</i>
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:20	Ishmael's destiny is foretold.
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:21–22	The time that Sarah would give birth is revealed; at a set time in the next year. Gen 17:21 <i>But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at a set time next year.</i>

The Timeline of Lot Living in Sodom				
Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:23–27	Abraham obeys God and circumcises himself and the men with him. Gen 17:24 Abraham was 99 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised, and his son Ishmael was 13 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised.
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Genesis 18:1–15	Jehovah and two angels come to Abraham and promise that Sarah would have a child in a year's time. Gen 18:10, 14 The LORD said, "I will certainly come back to you in about a year's time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!" Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him. Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son."
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Genesis 18:16–21	The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is promised.

The parenthetical dates are derived from what dates are given combined with time information gleaned from the Scripture. See the entire **Abrahamic Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) for the whole picture. After 23 years, Abraham reasons that, it is only logical that Lot has had some spiritual impact upon the city in which he lives. When Abraham tries to reason with God as to how God should deal with Sodom and Gomorrah, he makes this assumption.

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So, for something like 23 years, Lot was, to some extent, a missionary to Sodom. However, it is quite obvious that he had virtually no spiritual influence upon this people. As we will see later, the men who surround his house will not speak of Lot's God. And when Lot speaks to his sons-in-law about judgment coming from God, they think that he is joking. So Lot is without spiritual impact.

Abraham in militarily rescuing this people also seemed to have little impact upon them. There is nothing recorded of men from Sodom seeking Abraham out, or seeking out the priest, Melchizedek. However, in rescuing them, this was God both warning them and reaching out to them. But there was seemingly no positive volition toward God at the point of God consciousness.

We took a detour from this to examine our place within a nation and what should our relationship to our government be. This is because this latter half of the chapter along with the next will be about God's relationship to various corporate entities. We therefore studied the pivot and the client nation. At this point, we return to Genesis 18.

Gen 18:16–19 (ESV) Then the men [the two angels with God] set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, 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 to Abraham what He has promised him."

The *men* in this passage are the Lord Jesus Christ and two angels. Because of Abraham's spiritual impact on the world and because he has family living in the cities God is about to destroy, God asks, "Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" God is speaking to these two angels and to all of the angels who are observing this scene. It is very likely that God has focused the attention of the angels on what is going on in Sodom and what is going on outside of Abraham's tent.

Essentially, what God is doing here is teaching the angels. Do you note the preferential treatment that Abraham is getting? God does not appear to be wandering about from ranch to ranch, offering special benefits to each ranch owner. This preferential treatment is for Abraham alone. God will reveal to Abraham what His intentions are, and this is because Abraham has family in Sodom. God gives special benefits and recognition to believers who are advancing spiritually. This is direct blessing from God. Furthermore, this is blessing by association to those related to Abraham.

God has brought two angels with Him, and they have had fellowship with Abraham. The two angels will be the angels that will destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (and 3 other cities), and they represent the angels who are observing what God is doing. We tend to be very anthropocentric when thinking about God and the Bible; but there are a whole host of other beings who observe what is going on. Human history to angels is somewhat of a morality tale, if you will. What happens to us and our interaction with God reveals to all angelic creation the character of God. God's judgments become more understandable when angels see this enacted on the world stage. Angels understand God and their own relationship to God by watching us. You might call world history the ultimate feature film for angels (with a cast of billions) and a running time of 6000 years or more.

It is one thing for God to tell the angels that He is righteousness and justice. It is a whole other matter for angels to observe this with their very own eyes, as God deals with mankind. Because we are anthropocentric, we often give little thought to the Angelic Conflict, but it is key to the human experience, as our lives and human history explain to angels Who and What God is.

You may have wondered about the expression, *the glory of God*, which occurs 15 times in the New Testament. Is God some grand egotist? Does God need constant attention and adoration? Doing all things to the glory of God reveals His essence; it reveals His perfect character. When we act within the plan of God, we reveal who God is to people and to angels. This is why Paul tells the Corinthians: **So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God** (1Corinthians 10:31; ESV). And this is why all that Jesus did was to the glory of God: **Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high** (Hebrews 1:3).

But that which is actively against the glory of God must be removed.

Gen 18:20–21 Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know."

When Y^ehowah speaks of going to Sodom and Gomorrah to see what is going on, He already knows. God is omniscient. However, Sodom and Gomorrah stand as witnesses of cities which are out of control. Lot has a high political position in the city of Sodom—he is a judge there (Genesis 19:1, 9)—and yet, this sort of evil was occurring. Our takeaway from that is, spiritual influence is much greater than political influence (the spiritual

impact of Abraham, who does not even live in the Sodom and Gomorrah metropolitan area far outweighs the political influence of Lot who does).

The idea is, there is this great crying out from Sodom and Gomorrah because their sin is very heavy upon them, that God ought to go down at this time to investigate (the particle of entreaty can be translated *now*). Quite obviously, God is omniscient, so that He knows exactly what is going on there. However, he appears to be engaged in teaching the angels that He is with, at this time, and angels are not omniscient nor are they omnipresent. Therefore, they must be taken to Sodom and Gomorrah because of the cry that has come up to God; but first, there had to be this stop at Abraham's home.

You may ask, *why is this important? Why Does God need to bring angels round to see the degeneracy of Sodom and Gomorrah?* Prior to our time on earth, there were angels and there was God. A third of the angels fell (this is all in the **Doctrine of the Angelic Conflict** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))); led by Satan. As you may recall, God has already condemned Satan and the fallen angels to the Lake of Fire (Matthew 25:41); but they are not there yet. This suggests that Satan appealed this verdict, and I am sure one of his arguments was, "Why can't we all just get along? Why can't we [fallen angels] simply coexist with You, God? After all, we believe in tolerance and acceptance for all creatures just the way that they are." Sodom and Gomorrah tells us, on the human level, what happens when a degenerate human population goes unchecked, and does whatever they want to do. They will throw off all social restraints. The result of unchecked degeneracy is a place like Sodom. Places where there is great degeneracy cannot be simply allowed to remain—they become a cancerous tumor. As a corporate body, they act as a cancer to that which surrounds them. Just as cancer inside a human body will destroy that human body, so will a cancerous people destroy the populations they are in contact with.

We found the same thing to be true back in Genesis 6. God allowed the angels to interact with man, and the fallen angels took over the world, leading all mankind, apart from Noah's family, astray. The earth was filled with violence during this period of time.

For us as individuals, this tells us that, self-control is preferable to external controls. But it also reveals that mankind requires external controls.

There is a theme in the Old Testament which is pertinent, which is ignored by a lot of Bible teachers today: God periodically destroyed large groups of people because of their great degeneracy. God would often have Israel go into an area and be commanded to destroy every single man, woman and child. This is because their corrupting influence has reached a tipping point. In Genesis 19, God will use angels; however, in many subsequent chapters, God will use the nation of Israel to destroy great swaths of people. If God used Israel during the Age of Israel to destroy large groups of people, whom do you think God might use in the Church Age? Now and again, God is going to use a client nation to control a population, and even to decimate a population.

Obviously, here we have to be careful. First of all, God came and specifically told Israel which nations to destroy. God does not do that any more. We do not want a president, for instance, who hears the voice of God and that voice tells him what to do. However, we do want leaders who understand the power of the Word of God. FDR, for all of his faults, did understand one thing: the importance and power of the Word of God (and he spoke of this in public addresses). I know less about Truman and Eisenhower in that regard, but I do know that General Douglas MacArthur understood how important the gospel of Jesus Christ and Bible doctrine were, and called for both Bibles and missionaries to go to the countries which we had conquered.

Where we made our great mistakes in the early 2000's in Iraq and Afghanistan was having a Christian president who valued a form of government (democracy) over Christianity. So we imposed democracy on the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, but we did not impose religious freedom. We did not send in Bibles and missionaries. As a

result, whereas several generations of Americans have enjoyed Japan, Germany and South Korea as 3 of our greatest allies, who are in key parts of the globe; it is unlikely that Iraq and Afghanistan will join them in a long-term partnership (which is unfortunate, because, geo-politically, these nations are key because of their locations).

Gen 18:22–26 (mostly from the ESV) *So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."*

So Abraham stands before God and suggests something that he does not think is true. "Let's say that there are 50 believers in Sodom; You would not destroy the city and the 50 righteous as well, would You?" Abraham is pretty certain that there are not 50 believers in Sodom, but he is also pretty certain that God would not destroy Sodom if there are 50 believers there. Therefore, Abraham poses this theoretical question to God. And God agrees with Abraham; He would not destroy Sodom if there are 50 believers there. Quite obviously, *righteous* refers to those who have put their trust in Y^ehowah Elohim (Genesis 15:6). God, in his relationship to an entity such as a city, is not going to destroy that city if there are 50 believers in it. We do not know how large the population was in the Sodom and Gomorrah area, but this gives us the principle the God deals with groups of people corporately and that, generally speaking, God is not going to destroy an entire city if there are believers within that city.

Abraham continues to show impersonal (unconditional and unemotional) love toward his nephew Lot. We recall that they split apart their company because they could not keep their possessions straight, as they had so much livestock (Genesis 13:6–7). Abraham gave Lot the first choice of what land to live on, and Lot quickly took him up on this offer. Abraham has saved Lot in the past (Genesis 14) and now, standing before God, he hopes to deliver Lot once again from the judgment of God.

The more that we know about Lot, the more he seems like a fairly worthless person. However, he has believed in Jehovah Elohim, and he is, therefore, righteous in the eyes of God (2Peter 2:7). What we are witnessing here is an illustration of Jesus always making intercession on our behalf. **Therefore, Jesus Christ is also able to ultimately save us, we who come to God through Him, as He is always making intercession on our behalf** (Hebrews 7:25, personalized). Just as Satan went to God and accused Job before God (Job 1:6–11), no doubt Satan was before God talking to God about Lot. "Look at this worthless piece of human garbage; he lives in the midst of all of the sexual debauchery—he is no better and no worse than any of these people here. He has no testimony before this people. They are not affected by his presence. How can you call Lot righteous?" Fortunately, Lot has a mediator speaking on his behalf. That is Abraham, and Abraham represents Jesus Christ, Who is the Mediator between God and man (1Timothy 2:5–6).

Abraham approaches his prayer to God (God is standing right in front of him so his talking face to face with God is not different from prayer in principle). Abraham makes his case with God's essence in view. *"Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"* If God is the Judge of all the earth, then God must be righteous. How can a righteous God destroy righteous and unrighteous people together, as if there was no difference? And God agrees; if there are 50 believers in Sodom, then He will not destroy that city.

And so answers Abraham and so he says, “Behold, please: I am willingly choosing to speak unto my Adonai, and I [am] dust and ash.

Genesis
18:27

Then Abraham answered and said, “Listen, please: I have chosen to give an opinion unto my Adonai, even [though] I [am but] dust and ashes.

Then Abraham answered Y^ehowah and said, “Listen to me, please; I have chosen to give an opinion unto my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham responded, and said, I pray for mercy. Behold, now, I have begun to speak before the Lord; I, who am as dust and ashes.
Latin Vulgate	And Abraham answered, and said: Seeing I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so answers Abraham and so he says, “Behold, please: I am willingly choosing to speak unto my Adonai, and I [am] dust and ash.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham answered and said, Behold, I have ventured to speak before the LORD, and yet I am but dust and ashes...
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham answered and said, Now I have begun to speak to my Lord, and I am but dust and ashes.

Significant differences: The first phrase that Abraham speaks is slightly different in the various languages.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham responded, "Since I've already decided to speak with my Lord, even though I'm just soil and ash,...
Contemporary English V.	Abraham answered, "I am nothing more than the dust of the earth. Please forgive me, LORD, for daring to speak to you like this.
Easy English	Then Abraham replied, `I have been so bold that I have spoken to my *Lord. I am so much less important than you. So if someone compares me with you, I am only like dust and ashes. But I will ask you again.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Abraham said, “Compared to you, Lord, I am only dust and ashes. But let me bother you again and ask you this question:...
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham spoke again: "Please forgive my boldness in continuing to speak to you, Lord. I am only a man and have no right to say anything.
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham came back, "Do I, a mere mortal made from a handful of dirt, dare open my mouth again to my Master?
New Century Version	Then Abraham said, "Though I am only dust and ashes, I have been brave to speak to the Lord.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then AbraHam continued, 'My Lord; Here I am speaking to you, and all I am is dirt and ashes.
Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham answered and said, "Please, I am dust and ashes here, content speaking to the Lord."

Christian Community Bible	Abraham spoke up again, "I know that I am very bold to speak like this to my Lord, I who am only dust and ashes!
God's Word™	Abraham asked, "Consider now, if I may be so bold as to ask you, although I'm only dust and ashes,...
New American Bible	Abraham spoke up again: "See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord, though I am only dust and ashes!
New Jerusalem Bible	Abraham spoke up and said, 'It is presumptuous of me to speak to the Lord, I who am dust and ashes:...
Today's NIV	Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Abraham answering said, Truly, I who am only dust, have undertaken to put my thoughts before the Lord:...
Complete Jewish Bible	Avraham answered, "Here now, I, who am but dust and ashes, have taken it upon myself to speak to Adonai.
HCSB	Then Abraham answered, "Since I have ventured to speak to the Lord--even though I am dust and ashes--...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Abraham spoke up, saying, "Here I venture to speak to my Lord, I who am but dust and ashes:...
Judaica Press Complete T.	And Abraham answered and said, "Behold now I have commenced to speak to the Lord, although I am dust and ashes.
NET Bible®	Then Abraham asked, "Since I have undertaken to speak to the Lord [The Hebrew term translated "Lord" here and in vv. 30, 31, 32 is ??????? ('adonay).] (although I am but dust and ashes) [The disjunctive clause is a concessive clause here, drawing out the humility as a contrast to the Lord.],...
NIV, ©2011	Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes,...
The Scriptures 1998	And Abraham answered and said, "Look, please, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to יהוה, ...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And answering is Abraham and saying, "Behold, pray! Disposed am I to speak to Yahweh, and I am but soil and ashes.
Context Group Version	And Abraham answered and said, Seeing now that I have taken on myself to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes:...
exeGesés companion Bible	And Abraham answers and says, Behold, I beseech, I will to word to Adonay, I - dust and ashes:...
Hebrew Names Version	Avraham answered, "See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.
Heritage Bible	And Abraham answered, and said, Behold now, I have yielded myself to speak to the Lord who am but dust and ashes;...
LTHB	And Abraham answered and said, Behold, I pray, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, and I am dust and ash.
NASB	And Abraham replied, "Now behold, I have ventured [Lit undertaken] to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes.

Syndein	And Abraham answered {'anah} and said {'amar}, "I have been caused to 'communicate categorically doctrine' {dabar} to 'Adonay/Lord . . . I . . . {who am but} dust and ashes." {Note: Abraham is stating that he recognizes he is a being of 'mere elements of the earth', but he is 'speaking categorically' to God! He can only do this when he is confident he is on the firm foundation of God's Word.}
A Voice in the Wilderness	Then Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord:...
World English Bible	Abraham answered, "See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham answers and says, "Lo, I pray you, I have willed to speak unto the Lord, and I—dust and ashes.

The gist of this verse: Abraham asks to continue to speak to God, even though he is nothing before God.

Genesis 18:27a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i>]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
ʾAbʿrâhâm (אֲבִרָחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: Then Abraham answered...

Abraham already has a game plan, and God already knows what that game plan is. However, the angels who are with God cannot look into Abraham's mind, so they cannot see what his approach is. It will become obvious. God the Holy Spirit records all of this for our benefit.

Genesis 18:27b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Genesis 18:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced <i>naw</i>]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609

Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2nd person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Genesis 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Genesis 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Genesis 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word *let*.

Translation: ...and said, "Listen, please:..."

This is an interesting combination of words that Abraham uses. The first word is fairly bold, and it means *listen, look here, take note*; but then, almost as if Abraham catches himself and his own boldness, and he backs off, using a particle of entreaty. This indicates that he is making a polite request of God to hear him out.

Genesis 18:27c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
yâ'al (יָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yaw-AHL</i>]	<i>to willingly chose, to be willing to, to give ascent to; to undertake, to attempt, to try</i>	1 st person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #2974 BDB #383
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'el (אֵל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Genesis 18:27c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i>]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10

There are actually 3 forms of this word: 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; 'ădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; and 'ădônîy (אֲדֹנֵי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NEE*].

This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יִם) [pronounced *eem*], an older form of the *pluralis excellentiæ* (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1st person singular suffix, hence, *my Lord* (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from *my lords*).

There are points of grammar which speak to the options above, but not so that we may unequivocally choose between the three. (1) When we find 'ădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAH*] (note the difference of the vowel ending), it always means *my lords*. (2) Jehovah calls Himself 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*] in Job 28:28 Isaiah 8:7; however, many of the Job manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* and 8 ancient Isaiah manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* instead. This suggests, that either ancient Scribes were confused about this form of *Adonai* or that they simply substituted *Adonai* for *Y^ehowah*, which was not an abnormal practice (in oral readings, the ancient Tetragrammaton was not spoken, but *Lord* was said instead). And even if *every* manuscript read *Adonai*, then we may also reasonably conclude that one member of the Trinity is addressing another member of the Trinity (although the idea of God saying *my Lord* would be theologically confusing, even if addressing another member of the Trinity; although Jesus did refer to God the Father as *our Father*).

Translation: ...I have chosen to give an opinion unto my Adonai,...

Generally, the verb here means *to speak*. However, it has a variety of meanings, which include *to give an opinion*. Essentially, Abraham is going to present a well-reasoned, logical argument to God.

The first verb means *to willingly chose, to be willing to, to give ascent to; to undertake, to attempt, to try*. It is the verb of free will. From Abraham's free will; from his concern for his nephew Lot, who lives in the general area of Sodom and Gomorrah, he wishes to speak to God about Lot, but without naming him specifically. Abraham is making a logical argument based upon God's character, not upon Lot's character. Lot is incidental to the argument, although, for Abraham, Lot is the reason that Abraham is making this argument.

We spoke earlier of having a prayer, and you have the actual request but then, behind that request, is often a specific but unspoken desire. This argument that Abraham will make is very much like that. Underneath all of this is his desire for Lot to survive; however, he will not say anything to God about that desire. In any case, the argument that Abraham makes stands on its own, apart from Lot's defects or good points (if there are any).

Genesis 18:27d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
’ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
’âphâr (אֶפְרַיִם) [pronounced <i>gaw-FAWR</i>]	<i>dry earth, dust, powder, ashes, earth, ground, mortar, rubbish; dry or loose earth; debris; mortar; ore</i>	masculine singular substantive	Strong's #6083 BDB #779
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
’êpher (אֶפְרַיִם) [pronounced <i>Ā-fer</i>]	<i>ashes; figuratively, worthlessness</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #665 BDB #68

Translation: ...even [though] I [am but] dust and ashes.

There are several figures of speech found in v. 27. I will mention two of them. One is lost to us in the English: *dust and ashes*. The Hebrew words are ’âphâr (אֶפְרַיִם) [pronounced *gaw-FAWR*] and ’êpher (אֶפְרַיִם) [pronounced *Ā-fer*]. This is a **paronomasia**, where similar sounding words are synonymous (our situation here), antithetical or of varied significance. Furthermore, these words are commonly combined, so they form what is called a **syntheton** [pronounced *SYN-the-ton*], like rich and poor, meat the drink, young and old.

As Abraham begins his line of reasoning, notice that he recognizes that he is insignificant before God. He calls himself dust and ashes; Abraham is oriented to God's grace. Most believers never achieve even this most basic step in spiritual growth. They are always doing great things for God, giving God vast sums of money, allowing others to hear their testimony, giving others the opportunity to hear their wonderful singing voices. They are good people and because of that they expect God's blessing. And they have no concept of who and what they are and Who and What God is.

Abraham recognizes that he is the created being and, before God, he is nothing. However, we need to bear in mind that God is not angered by this; and God the Holy Spirit will preserve this argument that Abraham will make. This is so that we can understand the essence of God and how it is applied.

Abraham recognizes his place before God, yet asks to continue his reasoning. God has given all of us a mind and God expects us to use it. Nothing in Christianity suggests that you become some kind of a verse-spouting robot.

Abraham admits that he knows that he has no right to second-guess God (this is called grace orientation), but he continues to speak, and to reason with God. Remember, all angelic creation is likely watching this, watching this weak little man, who cannot change forms, who is subject to the tiniest of ailments, a man who will die physically some day after a very short amount of time (compared to angels), a man who could be easily crushed by any

angel, speaking to the God Who made him, reasoning with the Lord of the Universe; reasoning with the Lord Who gave him breath. Furthermore, God not only allows Abraham to speak and to reason with Him, but what Abraham says is recorded in the Word of God.

Genesis 18:27 Then Abraham answered and said, "Listen, please: I have chosen to give an opinion unto my Adonai, even [though] I [am but] dust and ashes. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:27 Then Abraham answered Y^ehowah and said, "Listen to me, please; I have chosen to give an opinion unto my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. (Kukis paraphrase)

<p>Suppose are lacking fifty the righteous ones five; will You destroy in the five all the city? And so He says, "I will not destroy if I find there forty and five."</p>	<p>Genesis 18:28</p>	<p>"Suppose the 50 righteous are lacking five; will You destroy the entire city because of the five?" And He said, "I will not destroy [the city] if I find there 45 [righteous ones]."</p>
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"Then let's suppose that there are five lacking from this 50; will you still destroy the entire city because of these five?" And He said, "I will not destroy the city if I find 45 believers there."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	Perhaps of the fifty innocent persons, five may be wanting. On account of the five who may be wanting to Zoar, will You destroy the whole city? And He said, I will not destroy it, if I find there forty and five.
Latin Vulgate	What if there be five less than fifty just persons? Will You for five and forty destroy the whole city? And he said: I will not destroy it, if I find five and forty.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Suppose are lacking fifty the righteous ones five; will You destroy in the five all the city? And so He says, "I will not destroy if I find there forty and five."
Peshitta (Syriac)	Suppose there will lack five of the fifty righteous; will you destroy the whole city for the lack of five men? And he said, If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it.
Septuagint (Greek)	But if the fifty righteous <u>should be diminished to forty-five</u> , will You destroy the whole city because of the five that are lacking? And He said, I will not destroy it, if I should find there forty-five.

Significant differences: The Greek has a slightly different first phrase, but it gives us almost the same intent.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	...what if there are five fewer innocent people than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city over just five?" The LORD said, "If I find forty-five there, I won't destroy it."
Contemporary English V.	But suppose there are only forty-five good people in Sodom. Would you still wipe out the whole city?" "If I find forty-five good people," the LORD replied, "I won't destroy the city."

Easy English	What would happen if there were 45 *righteous people? Would you ruin the whole city because there were 5 too few *righteous men in it? God said, 'I shall not ruin it if I find 45 *righteous people there.
Easy-to-Read Version	What if five good people are missing? What if there are only 45 good people in the city? Will you destroy a whole city for just five people?"
Good News Bible (TEV)	But perhaps there will be only forty-five innocent people instead of fifty. Will you destroy the whole city because there are five too few?" The LORD answered, "I will not destroy the city if I find forty-five innocent people."
<i>The Message</i>	What if the fifty fall short by five--would you destroy the city because of those missing five?" He said, "I won't destroy it if there are forty-five."
New Berkeley Version	Abraham replied, "I am aware that I have undertaken to speak to the LORD although I am but dust and ashes;...

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	Perhaps five decrease from the fifty righteous: will you destroy all the city for five?" He said, "If I find forty five there, I will destroy nothing."
Christian Community Bible	But perhaps the number of the good is five less than fifty. Will you destroy the town because of five?" Yahweh replied, "I will not destroy the town if I find forty-five good people there."
<i>God's Word™</i>	...what if there are 45 innocent people? Will you destroy the whole city because of 5 fewer people?" The LORD answered, "I will not destroy it if I find 45 there."
NIRV	What if the number of godly people is five less than 50? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?" "If I find 45 there," he said, "I will not destroy it."
New Jerusalem Bible	Suppose the fifty upright were five short? Would you destroy the whole city because of five?' 'No,' he replied, 'I shall not destroy it if I find forty-five there.'
Revised English Bible	...suppose there are five short of fifty innocent? Will you destroy the whole city for the lack of five men?' 'If I find forty-five there,' he replied, 'I shall not destroy it.'
Today's NIV	...what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?" "If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	If by chance there are five less than fifty upright men, will you give up all the town to destruction because of these five? And he said, I will not give it to destruction if there are forty-five.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	If there should want five just persons of the fifty, will You sweep away the whole city for want of five?" And He answered, "I will not sweep it away, if I find there forty-five."
New Advent Bible	What if there be five less than fifty just persons? Will you for five and forty destroy the whole city: And he said: I will not destroy it, if I find five and forty.
NET Bible®	...what if there are five less than the fifty godly people? Will you destroy [The Hebrew verb ?????? (shakhat, "to destroy") was used earlier to describe the effect of the flood.] the whole city because five are lacking [Heb "because of five."]? He replied, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	If five of the fifty righteous should be lacking--will You destroy the whole city for lack of five? He said, If I find forty-five, I will not destroy it.
Brenton (updated)	But if the fifty righteous should be diminished to forty-five, wilt you destroy the whole city because of the five wanting? And he said, I will not destroy it, if I should find there forty-five.
Concordant Literal Version	Perhaps lacking are the fifty righteous, five. Ruin wilt You, for five the entire city? And saying is He, "Not ruin it will I if I shall find there forty five.
Context Group Version	...perhaps there shall lack five of the fifty vindicated: will you destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, I will not destroy it, if I find there forty five.
Darby 9(updated) Translation	Perhaps there may want five of the fifty righteous: wilt you destroy all the city on account of the five? And he said, If I will find forty-five there, I will not destroy [it].
English Standard Version	Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there."
NASB	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."
World English Bible	What if there will lack five of the fifty righteous? Will you destroy all the city for lack of five?" He said, "I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there."
Young's Updated LT	Perhaps there are lacking five of the fifty righteous—do You destroy for five the whole of the city?" and He says, "I destroy it not, if I find there forty and five."

The gist of this verse: The Abraham asks God, "Let's say there are 45 people there who are righteous rather than 50; will you destroy the city on account of those 5?" God answers that He would not.

Genesis 18:28a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʿûwlay (אוּלַי) [pronounced oo-LAHY]	<i>perhaps, unless, suppose; if peradventure</i>	adverb/conjunction	Strong's #194 BDB #19
châçêr (חָצֵר) [pronounced khaw-SEHR]	<i>to lack, to need, to be lacking, to be devoid [of anything], to be without; to decrease, to be lessened; to be wanting; to fail</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2637 BDB #341
chămishîym (חֲמִשִּׁיִּם) [pronounced khuh-mih-SHEEM]	<i>fifty</i>	plural numeral	Strong's #2572 BDB #332
tsaddîyqîym (צַדִּיקִים) [pronounced tsaht-dee-KEEM]	<i>just ones, righteous ones, justified ones; [those who have been] vindicated</i>	masculine plural adjective, often used as a substantive; with the definite article	Strong's #6662 BDB #843
chămishshâh (חֲמִשָּׁה) [pronounced khuh-mish-SHAW]	<i>five</i>	numeral, feminine singular	Strong's #2568 BDB #331

Translation: “Suppose the 50 righteous are lacking five;...”

Notice how Abraham frames this question. “Let’s say that the 50 believers that we were talking about lack 5. We thought that there were 50 believers there, but that is not the case; it is 50 less 5.”

Genesis 18:28b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
hă (הַ) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i>		Strong’s #none BDB #209
shâchath (שָׁחַת) [pronounced <i>shaw-KHAHTH</i>]	<i>to cause one to go to ruin, to spoil, to ruin, to destroy; to corrupt [morally], to pervert</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong’s #7843 BDB #1007
bê (בֵּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong’s # BDB #88
Although the bêyth preposition is primarily a preposition of proximity, it can also mean <i>in, among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; because of; by means of, about, concerning.</i>			
chămishshâh (חֲמִשָּׁשׁ) [pronounced <i>khuh-mish-SHAW</i>]	<i>five</i>	numeral, feminine singular with the definite article	Strong’s #2568 BDB #331
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong’s #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong’s #3605 BDB #481
’îyr (עִיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong’s #5892 BDB #746

Translation: ...will You destroy the entire city because of the five?”

We have an unusual use of the bêyth preposition here, but a legitimate one. Abraham asks God if He will destroy the entire city because of the five—those five believers who aren’t there. Again, Abraham is carefully framing this question. Abraham is using a bit of debater’s technique with God. He focuses on the five, not on the 50. Therefore, he hopes that God will concentrate on the missing five as well.

Genesis 18:28c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (אל or אול) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâchath (שחַת) [pronounced <i>shaw-KHAHTH</i>]	<i>to cause one to go to ruin, to spoil, to ruin, to destroy; to corrupt [morally], to pervert</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7843 BDB #1007
'im (אם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
mâtsâ' (מצא) [pronounced <i>maw-TSAW</i>]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
shâm (שם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
'ar ^e bâ'iyim (ארבעים) [pronounced <i>ar^e-BAW-GEEM</i>]	<i>forty</i>	undeclined plural noun	Strong's #705 BDB #917
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
chämishshâh (חמשה) [pronounced <i>khuh-mish-SHAW</i>]	<i>five</i>	numeral, feminine singular with the definite article	Strong's #2568 BDB #331

Translation: And He said, "I will not destroy [the city] if I find there 45 [righteous ones]."

God promises that He will not destroy the city if there are 45 believers there.

Abraham asks, "What if there are only 45 righteous in Sodom?" And God promises not to destroy Sodom if there are 45 believers there.

Abraham will continue to ask about the size of the **pivot** (called *righteous* in this context) and if God will preserve a city because of fewer than 45 believers.

We do not have a clue as to the overall size of Sodom. My guess is, there is anywhere from 5000 to 50,000. Recall that the people of this area had been recently defeated in a war against the Aramæans, who probably had a force of 3000–30,000 when they attacked.

We spent a great deal of time examining the concept of a national entity, the client nation, the pivot and the spinoff, with a great many applications. Hopefully you are able to see the reason for spending all of that time on those topics.

Genesis 18:28 “Suppose the 50 righteous are lacking five; will You destroy the entire city because of the five?” And He said, “I will not destroy [the city] if I find there 45 [righteous ones].” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:28 “Then let’s suppose that there are five lacking from this 50; will you still destroy the entire city because of these five?” And He said, “I will not destroy the city if I find 45 believers there.” (Kukis paraphrase)

And so he adds again to speak unto Him and so he says, “Suppose is found there forty.” And so He says, “I will not do [this] because of the forty.”

Genesis
18:29

And still he continues to speak to Him and he says, “Suppose forty are found there.” And He answered, “I will not do [this] because of the forty.”

But Abraham continues speaking to God, and he asked, “Suppose forty believers are found there.” And God answered, “I will not do this thing because of the forty believers who are there.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And he added yet to speak before Him, and said, Perhaps there may be forty found there; <u>ten for each city of the four cities, and Zoar, whose guilt is lighter, forgive you for Your mercy's sake.</u> And he said, I will not <u>make an end</u> for the sake of the forty innocent ones.
Latin Vulgate	And again he said to him: But if forty be found there, what will you do? He said: I will not <u>destroy</u> it for the sake of forty.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he adds again to speak unto Him and so he says, “Suppose is found there forty.” And so He says, “I will not do [this] because of the forty.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham spoke to him and said, Suppose there shall be forty found there? And he said, I will not <u>destroy</u> it, if I find there forty.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he continued to speak to Him still, and said, But if there should be found there forty? And He said, I will not <u>destroy</u> it for the forty's sake.
Significant differences:	The targum has a lot of additional text. The Latin leaves out <i>to speak</i> . There is not a word for <i>destroy</i> in the Hebrew, although that is certainly implied.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Once again Abraham spoke, "What if forty are there?" The LORD said, "For the sake of forty, I will do nothing."
Contemporary English V.	"Suppose there are just forty good people?" Abraham asked. "Even for them," the LORD replied, "I won't destroy the city."
Easy English	Still Abraham asked again. He said, 'If you find only 40 *righteous people there, will you allow the city to remain?'
Easy-to-Read Version	The *Lord replied, 'Because of 40 *righteous people, I will not ruin it.' Abraham spoke again. He said, "And if you find only 40 good people there, will you destroy the city?"
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham spoke again: "Perhaps there will be only forty." He replied, "I will not destroy it if there are forty."
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham spoke up again, "What if you only find forty?" "Neither will I destroy it if for forty."
New Century Version	Again Abraham said to him, "If you find only forty good people there, will you destroy the city?" The Lord said, "If I find forty, I will not destroy it."
New Life Bible	Abraham spoke to Him again and said, "What if only forty are found there?" The Lord said, "I will not destroy it if there are forty."
New Living Translation	Then Abraham pressed his request further. "Suppose there are only forty?" And the LORD replied, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the forty."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	However, [AbraHam] just kept talking to him and said, 'What if there were only forty? Would you not destroy it for the sake of the forty?' The AEB here messes up on the verses; no idea if this was intentional or not. I have included what ought to be here, according to the Masoretic text.
Ancient Roots Translinear	He spoke to him still adding and saying, "Perhaps forty are found there." He said, "I will do nothing because of forty."
Beck's American Translation	Abraham talked to Him again. "What if forty are found there?" he said. "For the sake of forty I'll not do it," He answered.
Christian Community Bible	Again Abraham said to him, "Perhaps there will be only forty." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it."
<i>God's Word™</i>	Abraham asked him again, "What if 40 are found there?" He answered, "For the sake of the 40 I will not do it."
New American Bible	But Abraham persisted, saying, "What if only forty are found there?" He replied: I will refrain from doing it for the sake of the forty.
New Jerusalem Bible	Abraham persisted and said, 'Suppose there are forty to be found there?' 'I shall not do it,' he replied, 'for the sake of the forty.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And again he said to him, By chance there may be forty there. And he said, I will not do it if there are forty.
HCSB	Then he spoke to Him again, "Suppose 40 are found there?" He answered, "I will not do it on account of 40."
Judaica Press Complete T.	And he continued further to speak to Him, and he said, "Perhaps forty will be found there." And He said, "I will not do it for the sake of the forty."

NET Bible®

Abraham [Heb "he"; the referent (Abraham) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] **spoke to him again** [The construction is a verbal hendiadys - the preterite ("he added") is combined with an adverb "yet" and an infinitive "to speak."], **"What if forty are found there?"** He replied, "I will not do it for the sake of the forty."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

And [Abraham] spoke to Him yet again, and said, Suppose [only] forty shall be found there. And He said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

Concordant Literal Version

And proceeding is he further to speak to Him and saying, "Perhaps will be found there forty. And saying is He, "Not do it will I for the sake of the forty.

English Standard Version

Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it."

Heritage Bible

And he spoke to him yet again, and said, Perhaps there shall be forty there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake..

LTHB

And he continued still to speak to Him and said, Perhaps forty will be found there. And He said, I will not do *it* because of the forty.

Syndein

He {Abraham} intensely "communicated categorically doctrine" {dabar - Piel intensive} yet again and said {'amar}, "Perhaps there exists forty {righteous} found there." And He said, "I will not do/manufacture it {destruction} {'asah - out of divine righteousness and justice} for forty's sake."

World English Bible

He spoke to him yet again, and said, "What if there are forty found there?" He said, "I will not do it for the forty's sake."

Young's Updated LT

And he adds again to speak unto Him and says, "Peradventure there are found there forty?" And He says, "I do it not, because of the forty."

The gist of this verse:

Then Abraham asks about 40 believers; will God destroy this area if 40 believers are found there; and God tells Abraham that He would not.

Genesis 18:29a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâçaph (יָצַף) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again; to continue to</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
ôwd (וַיְוַד) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
This is the infinitive absolute of the verb <i>to go over again, to repeat.</i>			

Genesis 18:29a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^o]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: [And still he continues to speak to Him...](#)

Abraham has a clear goal here—one which God understood in eternity past—and Abraham proposes another scenario to God.

Genesis 18:29b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'ûwlay (אִלּוּלַי) [pronounced oo-LAHY]	<i>perhaps, unless, suppose; if peradventure</i>	adverb/conjunction	Strong's #194 BDB #19
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to acquire, to be found, to be detected, to be discovered, to be present, to exist</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

Genesis 18:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ar ^e bâ'îym (מֵיעֲבָרָא) [pronounced ar ^e -BAW- GEEM]	forty	undeclined plural noun	Strong's #705 BDB #917

Translation: ...and he says, "Suppose forty are found there."

This time, Abraham's language is less measured. It is still exact, but Abraham goes immediately for the number, with making an argument as to how he gets there. Now, we don't know if this is a part of what he said or if this is all of it. However, the gist is understood in nearly any translation. "What will you do, God, if there are 40 believers found in this vicinity? Will you still destroy these cities?"

Genesis 18:29c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
ba'âbûwr (בְּעִבְרָא) [pronounced bah-ġu ^b - VOOR]	<i>because of, for, that, for the sake of, on account of, in order that; while</i>	preposition/conjunction; substantive always found combined with the bêyth preposition; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5668 BDB #721
Actually a combination of the bêyth preposition (<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before</i>) and 'âbûwr (עִבְרָא) [pronounced ġaw ^v -BOOR] which means <i>a passing over, a transition; the cause of a crossing over; the price [of transferring ownership of something]; purpose, objective</i> . Properly, it is the passive participle of Strong's #5674 BDB #720. Strong's #5668 BDB #721.			
'ar ^e bâ'îym (מֵיעֲבָרָא) [pronounced ar ^e -BAW- GEEM]	forty	undeclined plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #705 BDB #917

Translation: And He answered, “I will not do [this] because of the forty.”

God’s answer is also more clipped, although the meaning is clear.

What is happening is, Abraham is negotiating with God, trying to determine at what point is a city safe from total destruction. How many believers (righteous ones) must be in the city in order to preserve it? Recall that Abraham was made righteous through his faith in Jehovah Elohim (Genesis 15:6). He is hoping that God will preserve the city because of Lot’s family being righteous. So his goal is to get God down to the point where, the number of righteous that God will preserve a city for are the same as the number of people in Lot’s family.

Do not think for one moment that Abraham has developed this logical approach, and that God used to think one way, but after hearing Abraham’s argument, God’s mind will be changed. It will appear as if God’s mind is being changed, but the idea in all of this is to understand the concept of a national entity, its pivot and God’s blessing or judgment which is dispensed.

However, do not think for one moment that this is wasted breath. This interaction between God and Abraham is the reason why we made such a detailed study of national entities and their preservation.

Genesis 18:29 And still he continues to speak to Him and he says, “Suppose forty are found there.” And He answered, “I will not do [this] because of the forty.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:29 But Abraham continues speaking to God, and he asked, “Suppose forty believers are found there.” And God answered, “I will not do this thing because of the forty believers who are there.” (Kukis paraphrase)

And so he says, “Do not please [let there] be anger to my Adonai and I will speak: Suppose are found there thirty?” And so He says, “I will not do [this] if I find there thirty.”

Genesis
18:30

Then Abraham [lit., *he*] said, “Please, let not my Adonai become angry so I may speak: suppose 30 [believers] are found there?” And He answered, “I will not do [this thing] if I find 30 [believers] there.”

Then Abraham said, “Please, do not become angry, my Lord, so that I may speak: suppose that 30 believers are found?” And He answered, “I will not do this thing if I find 30 believers there.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

And he said, Let not the displeasure of the Lord, the Lord of all the world, wax strong against me, and I will speak. Perhaps thirty who pray may be found there, ten for each of the three cities, and Zeboim and Zoar forgive them for Thy mercy’s sake. And He said, I will not make an end if I find thirty there.

Latin Vulgate

Lord, he says, be not angry, I beseech You, if I speak: What if thirty will be found there? He answered: I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so he says, “Do not please [let there] be anger to the Adonai [my Adonai?] and I will speak: Suppose is found there thirty?” And so He says, “I will not do [this] if I find there thirty.”

Peshitta (Syriac)	Then Abraham said, Oh let not the LORD be displeased and I will speak: Suppose there shall thirty be found there? And he said, I will not <u>destroy</u> it, if I find thirty there.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said, Will there be anything against me, Lord, if I shall speak? But if there be found there thirty? And He said, I will not <u>destroy</u> it for the thirty's sake.
Significant differences:	The targum has a lot of additional text. The final verb in the Hebrew is <i>to do</i> , not <i>to destroy</i> .

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Abraham said, "Please don't be angry, LORD, if I ask you what you will do if there are only thirty good people in the city." "If I find thirty," the LORD replied, "I still won't destroy it."
Easy English	Abraham said, `Do not be angry, my *Lord, if I speak again. If you find 30 *righteous people there, what will happen?' The *Lord replied, `I will not ruin it if I find 30 *righteous people there.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me. Let me ask you this: If only 30 good people are in the city, will you destroy the city?"
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham said, "Please don't be angry, Lord, but I must speak again. What if there are only thirty?" He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty."
<i>The Message</i>	He said, "Master, don't be irritated with me, but what if only thirty are found?" "No, I won't do it if I find thirty."
New Century Version	Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me, but let me ask you this. If you find only thirty good people in the city, will you destroy it?" He said, "If I find thirty good people there, I will not destroy the city."
New Living Translation	"Please don't be angry, my Lord," Abraham pleaded. "Let me speak-suppose only thirty righteous people are found?" And the LORD replied, "I will not destroy it if I find thirty."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And he went on, 'Lord, please don't hold it against me if I continue to speak; but, what if there were thirty?' And the Lord replied, 'I won't destroy it for the sake of thirty.' And he said, 'I won't destroy it if I can only find twenty.'
Ancient Roots Translinear	He said, "Please do not flare, Lord, for I speak: Perhaps thirty are found there." He said, "I will do nothing if I find thirty there."
Christian Community Bible	Abraham went on, saying, "May my Lord not be angry, but let me speak. Maybe only thirty good people will be found in the town." Yahweh answered, "I will not destroy it if I find thirty there."
<i>God's Word</i> ™	"Please don't be angry if I speak again," Abraham said. "What if 30 are found there?" He answered, "If I find 30 there, I will not do it."
New American Bible	Then he said, "Do not let my Lord be angry if I go on. What if only thirty are found there?" He replied: I will refrain from doing it if I can find thirty there.
New Jerusalem Bible	Abraham said, 'I hope the Lord will not be angry if I go on: Suppose there are only thirty to be found there?' 'I shall not do it,' he replied, 'if I find thirty there.'
New Simplified Bible	Abraham then said: »Do not be angry, and let me speak. Suppose thirty should be found there?« God replied: »I will not do it if I find thirty there.«

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And he said, Let not the Lord be angry with me if I say, What if there are thirty there? And he said, I will not do it if there are thirty.
Complete Jewish Bible	He said, "I hope Adonai won't be angry if I speak. What if thirty are found there?" He said, "I won't do it if I find thirty there."
HCSB	Then he said, "Let the Lord not be angry, and I will speak further. Suppose 30 are found there?" He answered, "I will not do it if I find 30 there."
Judaica Press Complete T.	And he said, "Please, let the Lord's wrath not be kindled, and I will speak. Perhaps thirty will be found there." And He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."
NET Bible®	Then Abraham [Heb "he"; the referent (Abraham) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] said, "May the Lord not be angry [Heb "let it not be hot to the Lord." This is an idiom which means "may the Lord not be angry."] so that I may speak [After the jussive, the cohortative indicates purpose/result.!] What if thirty are found there?" He replied, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."
NIV – UK	Then he said, May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there? He answered, I will not do it if I find thirty there.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And he said, "Let not הויה be displeased, and let me speak: Suppose there are found thirty?" And He said, "I would not do it if I find thirty there."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then [Abraham] said to Him, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak [again]. Suppose [only] thirty shall be found there. And He answered, I will not do it if I find thirty there.
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is he, "My Lord must not, pray, be hot when I speak. Perhaps will be found there thirty. And saying is He, "Not do it will I if I shall find there thirty.
English Standard Version	Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there."
Heritage Bible	And he said to him, Oh let not the Lord burn, and I will speak; perhaps there will be thirty. And he said, I will not do it if there are thirty.
LTHB	And he said, Please do not my Lord be angry, that I may speak; perhaps thirty will be found there. And He said, I will not do it if I find thirty there.
New RSV	Then he said, 'Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there.' He answered, 'I will not do it, if I find thirty there.'
Syndein	And he said {'amar} unto Him, "Oh let not 'Adonay/Lord be angry, and I will keep on intensely "communicating categorically doctrine" {dabar - Piel intensive imperfect}. "Perhaps there exists thirty {righteous} found there." And He said, "I will not do/manufacture it {destruction} {'asah - out of divine righteousness and justice} for thirty's sake."
World English Bible	He said, "Oh don't let the Lord be angry, and I will speak. What if there are thirty found there?" He said, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there."
Young's Updated LT	And he says, "Let it not be, I Pray you, displeasing to the Lord, and I speak: peradventure there are found there thirty?" and He says, "I do it not, if I find there thirty."

The gist of this verse: Abraham asks about 30 believers, and God assures him that He will not destroy this area if there are 30 believers in it.

Genesis 18:30a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לא or לו) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâ' (נא) [pronounced <i>naw</i>]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609

Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "[Oh, that I may not respect any man's person](#)"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2nd person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Genesis 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Genesis 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Genesis 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word *let*.

chârâh (חרה) [pronounced <i>khaw-RAWH</i>]	<i>to burn, to kindle, to become angry, to evoke great emotion</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2734 BDB #354
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i>]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated <i>Adonai, adonai</i></i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10

There are actually 3 forms of this word: 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; 'ădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; and 'ădônîy (אֲדֹנֵי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NEE*].

This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יַיִם) [pronounced *eem*], an older form of the *pluralis excellentiæ* (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1st person singular suffix, hence, *my Lord* (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from *my lords*).

Genesis 18:30a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
<p>There are points of grammar which speak to the options above, but not so that we may unequivocally choose between the three. (1) When we find ʾădônay (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAH</i>] (note the difference of the vowel ending), it always means <i>my lords</i>. (2) Jehovah calls Himself ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i>] in Job 28:28 Isaiah 8:7; however, many of the Job manuscripts read <i>Y^ehowah</i> and 8 ancient Isaiah manuscripts read <i>Y^ehowah</i> instead. This suggests, that either ancient Scribes were confused about this form of <i>Adonai</i> or that they simply substituted <i>Adonai</i> for <i>Y^ehowah</i>, which was not an abnormal practice (in oral readings, the ancient Tetragrammaton was not spoken, but <i>Lord</i> was said instead). And even If <i>every</i> manuscript read <i>Adonai</i>, then we may also reasonably conclude that one member of the Trinity is addressing another member of the Trinity (although the idea of God saying <i>my Lord</i> would be theologically confusing, even if addressing another member of the Trinity; although Jesus did refer to God the Father as <i>our Father</i>).</p>			

Translation: Then Abraham [lit., *he*] said, “Please, let not the Adonai become angry...”

This translation is not altogether accurate, but it reasonably relays what is said. *My Adonai* is not properly the subject, as it is preceded by the lamed preposition. However, there is no specified subject for this verb *to be angry*. This might be more literally rendered *let there not be anger to my Adonai*. However, the general idea is easy to grasp.

Genesis 18:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	1 st person singular, Piel imperfect with a cohortative hê	Strong's #1696 BDB #180

The hê at the end is called a volutative hê and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word *let, may, might, ought, should*.

Translation: ...so I may speak:...

Abraham has a number that he is going for. Jesus Christ knows what this number is, but He allows him to continue.

What has occurred to me is, based upon what we find in this portion of Genesis, we learn early on how numbers are used, what stands for which number, so that there would not be a confusion about these particular numbers from hereon out. It is worth reminding you that the vowels were not added until A.D. 500–1000, whereas Hebrew

was dying out as a spoken language some time before that. Even Jesus and the Apostles mostly spoke Greek and Aramaic. It is possible that Matthew knew Hebrew and likely that Jesus did.

Genesis 18:30c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ûwlay (אילוי) [pronounced oo-LAHY]	<i>perhaps, unless, suppose; if peradventure</i>	adverb/conjunction	Strong's #194 BDB #19
mâtsâ' (מצא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to acquire, to be found, to be detected, to be discovered, to be present, to exist</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
shâm (שמ) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
sh ^l ôshîym (שלשים) [pronounced sh ^l ow-SHEEM]	<i>thirty</i>	plural numeral	Strong's #7970 BDB #1026

Translation: ...suppose 30 [believers] are found there?"

Abraham uses the exact same language as he had used in v. 29; "suppose 30 are found..." We are still speaking of believers in Jehovah Elohim; and there is no distinguishing between mature believers and immature believers.

Abraham continues along this same line. He has predetermined how many believers that there should be in Lot's family. He has kept up well enough to know that in Lot's family and servants, there are going to be at least 10 members, including in-laws. The Bible does not give us a specific number anywhere, but it does tell us how many in Lot's family were saved: Lot, possibly his wife and his two virgin daughters. No one else in his family, including his in-laws, including his sons, servants and any married daughters, were believers in Jesus Christ. How tragic for a believer in Jesus Christ to have a testimony so inadequate that less than half of the members of the family believe in Jesus Christ. All children have free will and it is possible to have a child who, no matter what you do, goes bad. However, how terrible for your personal testimony to sway less than half of your household.

Genesis 18:30d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לא or אול) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

Genesis 18:30d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
‘âsâh (אָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
’îm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
mâtsâ’ (מָצָא) [pronounced <i>maw-TSAW</i>]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
sh ^l ôshîym (שְׁלֹשִׁים) [pronounced <i>sh^low-SHEEM</i>]	<i>thirty</i>	plural numeral	Strong's #7970 BDB #1026

Translation: And He answered, “I will not do [this thing] if I find 30 [believers] there.”

Jehovah Elohim clearly answers that He will not do this thing if 30 believers can be found. What He will not do is destroy the city.

Genesis 18:30 Then Abraham [lit., *he*] said, “Please, let not my Adonai become angry so I may speak: suppose 30 [believers] are found there?” And He answered, “I will not do [this thing] if I find 30 [believers] there.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:30 Then Abraham said, “Please, do not become angry, my Lord, so that I may speak: suppose that 30 believers are found?” And He answered, “I will not do this thing if I find 30 believers there.” (Kukis paraphrase)

And so answers Abraham and so he says, “Behold, please: I am willingly choosing to speak unto my Adonai. Suppose are found there twenty?” And so He says, “I will not destroy because of the twenty.”

Genesis
18:31

Then Abraham answered and said, “Listen, please: I have chosen to speak unto my Adonai—suppose 20 [believers] are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy [the city] because of the 20.”

Then Abraham answered Yehowah and said, “Listen to me, please; I have chosen to say this unto my Lord—suppose that 20 believers are found?” And He said, “I will not destroy the city because of the 20 believers who are there.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And he said, <u>Imploring mercy</u> , I have now begun to speak before the Lord, <u>the Lord of all the world</u> . Perhaps <u>twenty who pray</u> may be found; <u>ten in each of the two cities, and the three forgive You for Your mercy's sake!</u> And He said, I will not destroy for the sake of the twenty innocent.
Latin Vulgate	Seeing, saith he, I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord: What if twenty be found there? He said: I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so answers Abraham and so he says, "Behold, please: I am willingly choosing to speak unto my Adonai. Suppose are found there twenty?" And so He says, "I will not destroy because of the twenty."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he said, Behold, I have ventured to speak before the LORD; suppose there shall be twenty found there? And he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said, Since I am able to speak to the Lord, what if there should be found there twenty? And He said, I will not destroy it, if <u>I should find there</u> twenty.
Significant differences:	There is a lot of extra text in the targum. This time, the verb used at the end is <i>to destroy</i> . The Greek slightly changes up the final phrase.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham said, "Since I've already decided to speak with my Lord, what if twenty are there?" The LORD said, "I won't do it, for the sake of twenty."
Contemporary English V.	Then Abraham said, "I don't have any right to ask you, LORD, but what would you do if you find only twenty?" "Because of them, I won't destroy the city," was the LORD's answer.
Easy English	Abraham said, 'I have been very bold. So I have spoken to my *Lord in this way. If you find 20 *righteous people there, what will happen?' The *Lord replied, 'Because of 20 people, I will not ruin it.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Abraham said, "May I bother my Lord again and ask, what if there are 20 good people?"
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham said, "Please forgive my boldness in continuing to speak to you, Lord. Suppose that only twenty are found?" He said, "I will not destroy the city if I find twenty."
<i>The Message</i>	He pushed on, "I know I'm trying your patience, Master, but how about for twenty?" "I won't destroy it for twenty."
New Century Version	Then Abraham said, "I have been brave to speak to the Lord. But what if there are twenty good people in the city?" He answered, "If I find twenty there, I will not destroy the city."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So he said, 'Since I am allowed to speak to [my] Lord; What if you can only find twenty?'
Ancient Roots Translinear	And he said, 'I won't destroy it if I can only find twenty.' He said, "Please, I am content to speak to the Lord here: Perhaps twenty are found there." And he said, "I will destroy nothing because of twenty."

<i>God's Word</i> TM	"Look now, if I may be so bold as to ask you," Abraham said. "What if 20 are found there?" He answered, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the 20."
New American Bible	Abraham went on, "Since I have thus presumed to speak to my Lord, what if there are no more than twenty?" I will not destroy it, he answered, for the sake of the twenty.
New Jerusalem Bible	He said, 'It is presumptuous of me to speak to the Lord: Suppose there are only twenty there?' 'I shall not destroy it,' he replied, 'for the sake of the twenty.'
New Simplified Bible	Abraham then said: »Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to Jehovah: Suppose twenty should be found there?« God replied: »I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.«

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And he said, See now, I have undertaken to put my thoughts before the Lord: what if there are twenty there? And he said, I will have mercy because of the twenty.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	He continued however, "See, now, I will dare to speak to my LORD; if there are 20 found there?" And He answered, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty."
HCSB	Then he said, "Since I have ventured to speak to the Lord, suppose 20 are found there?" He replied, "I will not destroy it on account of 20."
Judaica Press Complete T.	And he said, "Behold now I have desired to speak to the Lord, perhaps twenty will be found there." And He said, "I will not destroy for the sake of the twenty."
NET Bible®	Abraham [Heb "he"; the referent (Abraham) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] said, "Since I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty are found there?" He replied, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty."
NIV – UK	Abraham said, Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there? He said, For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And [Abraham] said, Behold now, I have taken upon myself to speak [again] to the Lord. Suppose [only] twenty shall be found there. And [the Lord] replied, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is he, "Behold, pray! Disposed am I to speak to my Lord. Perhaps will be found there twenty. And saying is He, "Not ruin it will I, for the sake of the twenty.
Context Group Version	And he said, Seeing now that I have taken on myself to speak to the Lord: perhaps there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake.
Updated <i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And he sad Behold, I pray you, I have ventured to speak unto My Lord, Perhaps there may be found there—twenty. And he said I will not destroy it, for the sake of the twenty.
English Standard Version	He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it."
Heritage Bible	And he said, Behold now, I have yielded myself to speak to the Lord. Perhaps there shall be twenty. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.
New RSV	He said, 'Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.'

Syndein	And he {Abraham} said {amar}, "Behold, I have caused to take upon myself to surly be intensively "communicating categorically doctrine" {dabar - Piel intensive infinitive} unto 'Adonai/Lord "Perhaps there exists twenty {righteous} found there." And He said, "I will not do/manufacture it {destruction} {asah - out of divine righteousness and justice} for twenty's sake."
A Voice in the Wilderness	And he said, Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there? And He said, I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.
World English Bible	He said, "See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord. What if there are twenty found there?" He said, "I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake."
Young's Updated LT	And he says, "Lo, I pray you, I have willed to speak unto the Lord: peradventure there are found there twenty?" and He says, "I do not destroy it, because of the twenty."
The gist of this verse:	Abraham: "What about 20 believers?" God replied, "I will not destroy this area if there are 20 believers there."

Genesis 18:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
nâ' (אָנֹכִי) [pronounced <i>naw</i>]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609

Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2nd person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Genesis 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Genesis 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Genesis 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word *let*.

yâ'al (אָל) [pronounced <i>yaw-AHL</i>]	<i>to willingly chose, to be willing to, to give ascent to; to undertake, to attempt, to try</i>	1 st person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #2974 BDB #383
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 18:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10

There are actually 3 forms of this word: 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]; 'ădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]; and 'ădônîy (אֲדֹנֵי) [pronounced uh-doh-NEE].

This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יִם) [pronounced eem], an older form of the *pluralis excellentiæ* (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1st person singular suffix, hence, *my Lord* (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from *my lords*).

There are points of grammar which speak to the options above, but not so that we may unequivocally choose between the three. (1) When we find 'ădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAH] (note the difference of the vowel ending), it always means *my lords*. (2) Jehovah calls Himself 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY] in Job 28:28 Isaiah 8:7; however, many of the Job manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* and 8 ancient Isaiah manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* instead. This suggests, that either ancient Scribes were confused about this form of *Adonai* or that they simply substituted *Adonai* for *Y^ehowah*, which was not an abnormal practice (in oral readings, the ancient Tetragrammaton was not spoken, but *Lord* was said instead). And even if every manuscript read *Adonai*, then we may also reasonably conclude that one member of the Trinity is addressing another member of the Trinity (although the idea of God saying *my Lord* would be theologically confusing, even if addressing another member of the Trinity; although Jesus did refer to God the Father as *our Father*).

Translation: Then Abraham answered and said, "Listen, please: I have chosen to speak unto my Adonai..."

What Abraham will say and what God will say are essentially cobbled together from 2 or 3 previous verses. Abraham uses a particle to call for God's attention, but then he uses the particle of entreaty. Quite obviously, his tone of voice would count for a lot here.

In the second half of this portion of the verse, Abraham indicates his willingness—the use of his free will—to speak to God. Although we have no words anywhere saying, “Good job, Abraham;” we may reasonably assume that God wants us to come to Him in prayer and make intercession for others.

Genesis 18:31b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ûwlay (אילוי) [pronounced oo-LAHY]	<i>perhaps, unless, suppose; if peradventure</i>	adverb/conjunction	Strong's #194 BDB #19
mâtsâ' (מצא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to acquire, to be found, to be detected, to be discovered, to be present, to exist</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
shâm (שמ) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
'es ^e rîym (עשרים) [pronounced ges ^e -REEM]	<i>twenty</i>	plural numeral adjective	Strong's #6242 BDB #797

Translation:...—suppose 20 [believers] are found there?”

Again, these words have been used exactly already by Abraham. The only difference is the number 20. He asks what if 20 believers can be found there in the cities that God will destroy.

Genesis 18:31c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (אל or אול) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâchath (שחח) [pronounced shaw-KHAHTH]	<i>to cause one to go to ruin, to spoil, to ruin, to destroy; to corrupt [morally], to pervert</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7843 BDB #1007

Genesis 18:31c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ba'ăbûwr (בְּעַב) [pronounced <i>bah-gû^b-VOOR</i>]	<i>because of, for, that, for the sake of, on account of, in order that; while</i>	preposition/conjunction; substantive always found combined with the bēyth preposition; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5668 BDB #721
Actually a combination of the bēyth preposition (<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before</i>) and 'ăbûwr (עַב) [pronounced <i>gaw^v-BOOR</i>] which means <i>a passing over, a transition; the cause of a crossing over; the price [of transferring ownership of something]; purpose, objective</i> . Properly, it is the passive participle of Strong's #5674 BDB #720. Strong's #5668 BDB #721.			
'es ^e rîym (עֶשְׂרִים) [pronounced <i>ges^e-REEM</i>]	<i>twenty</i>	plural numeral adjective with the definite article	Strong's #6242 BDB #797

Translation: And He said, "I will not destroy [the city] because of the 20."

God's answer also comes from a previous verse, except with the number 20 instead. God promises that He will not destroy these cities if there are 20 believers who are there.

Genesis 18:31 Then Abraham answered and said, "Listen, please: I have chosen to speak unto my Adonai—suppose 20 [believers] are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy [the city] because of the 20." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:31 Then Abraham answered Yehowah and said, "Listen to me, please; I have chosen to say this unto my Lord—suppose that 20 believers are found?" And He said, "I will not destroy the city because of the 20 believers who are there." (Kukis paraphrase)

Gen 18:30 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there."

Gen 18:31 He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it."

This tells us that, in the city of Sodom, if there were 20 believers in that city, God would not destroy the entire city. By application, let's look at New Orleans, which was struck by a tremendously destructive hurricane, Katrina. Although the city was knocked back on its heels, it was certainly not devastated. Louisiana has a large population of people who believe in Jesus Christ. However, they also had a huge population of people living on welfare who should not have been, large gangs which had begun to terrorize the city, and great corruption in their politics (many of their politicians used Katrina for political theater within hours of the storm passing over). Katrina, in many ways, began a cleansing process in Louisiana. And, although I have not looked into the spiritual aspects, I am certain that their churches, once drained of water, enjoyed a surge of participants.

So far, this is what have studied in the second half of this chapter:

Gen 18:16–19 The men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. Abraham went with them to see them on their way. Yahweh said, "Will I hide from Abraham what I do, seeing that Abraham has surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Yahweh may bring on Abraham that which he has spoken of him."

Two angels and the 2nd Member of the Trinity have come to eat and fellowship with Abraham. They appear as men to Abraham and they will appear as men to Sodom, where the two angels are going.

It ought to be obvious that God does not come to Abraham and consult with him on every natural or supernatural disaster for every geographical area. The line of Abraham is remarkable. His people would become a great nation and all of the nations of the earth would be blessed in him. Furthermore, Abraham would teach his children and their children the way of God, which begins as faith and then grows to experiential righteousness and justice. In this situation, Abraham's nephew Lot lives where God will bring judgment, and God believes that Abraham should be told.

Gen 18:20–21 Yahweh said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come to me. If not, I will know."

Many times in the Bible, God will speak, but it is unclear to whom He is speaking. These angels are to whom God speaks, along with all of the unseen angels that God created, both fallen and elect. The Bible unapologetically speaks about angelic creation over and over again. The reason that Job and his friends were unable to understand Job's great sufferings is, they understood the character of God, but they never considered the Angelic Conflict in their discussions.

God is omniscient, so He knows all that occurs in this world. However, from time to time, He focuses the attention of angels upon certain things. He focused the angels upon Abraham in particular and told what would happen to his bloodline. He focused on the degeneracy of Sodom and that the five cities in this area must be destroyed, because men have cried out to God because of the evil in that geographical area.

It is both logical and reasonable that God is not just speaking about these two angels with Him but all of the angels. Angels are like us, insofar as they can only be in one place at one time. Although we have no idea how many billions of angels that God created, not all of them know about Abraham; not all of them know about what is going on in Sodom. God guides them to observe this part of human history as it actively proceeds in time.

Here, God is focusing on the cries of those who have suffered physical harm and pain because of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. It ought to be clear to all observers that, intentionally inflicting harm upon individuals is wrong, and this particular geographical area had reached a saturation point of sinfulness. There was no law and order.

Gen 18:22–25 The men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before Yahweh. Abraham drew near, and said, "Will you consume the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous within the city? Will you consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are therein? Be it far from you to do things like that, to kill the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked. May that be far from you. Shouldn't the Judge of all the earth do right?"

The angels proceed on foot toward Sodom. However, Abraham stands before God, as a mediator, as it were, for the people of Sodom in general and for Lot and his family in particular. Abraham makes an argument to God:

“What if there are 50 righteous in the city of Sodom? Would you still destroy it, killing all of the righteous with the unrighteous?” In the Old Testament, the term *righteous* often refers to those who have believed in Y^ehowah Elohim, the 2nd Person of the Trinity (Genesis 15:6). Abraham was quite certain that God would agree not to destroy Sodom if there were 50 believers there. And, he was correct in that assumption.

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

Gen 18:27–31 Abraham answered, "See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes. What if there will lack five of the fifty righteous? Will you destroy all the city for lack of five?" He said, "I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there." He spoke to him yet again, and said, "What if there are forty found there?" He said, "I will not do it for the forty's sake." He said, "Oh don't let the Lord be angry, and I will speak. What if there are thirty found there?" He said, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." He said, "See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord. What if there are twenty found there?" He said, "I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake."

Methodically, Abraham continues to reason with God. He reduces the number of righteous by 5, and God agrees that He would not destroy Sodom if there were 45 righteous living there. Then Abraham asks, “What about 40? What about 30? What about 20?” Each time, God agrees that He would not destroy Sodom if there are this many believers living there.

This tells us that God preserves geographical areas when there are a number of believers in those geographical areas. However, there is a point at which God will judge a geographical area.

Personally, I am a child of the 50's, and part of the national psyche in those years was, we had nuclear weapons, Russia had nuclear weapons, and any day now, we might end up destroying one another with these weapons. That is pure hokum. At the same time, Billy Graham was going across the American landscape telling millions of people about Jesus Christ; and probably millions eventually believed in Jesus Christ because of his evangelism. You have to choose, on many occasions, what do you believe? Do you believe the Word of God (God will not destroy a nation with millions of believers) or do you believe what society seems to think, that, any minute now, our country could be destroyed with Russian nuclear weapons?

This does not mean that we, as a nation, act foolishly, and disband our military and disarm our nuclear warheads. Nowhere in the Bible does God suggest that a nation not have a vibrant military. Under King David, a man after God's Own heart, Israel, a theocracy, had one of the great militaries in human history. The Bible even glorifies several of the officers under David's command in two places.

And so he says, “Do not please [let there] be anger to my Adonai and I will speak only the time: Suppose are found there ten?” And so He says, “I will not destroy because of the ten.”

Genesis
18:32

Then Abraham [lit., he] said, “Please, let not my Adonai become angry so I may speak just this one time—suppose 10 [believers] are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy [the city] because of the 10.”

Then Abraham said, “Please, do not become angry, my Lord, so that I may speak just one more time—suppose that 10 believers are found?” And He said, “I will not destroy the city because of the 10 believers who are there.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And he said, I implore mercy before You! Let not the anger of the Lord, <u>the Lord of all the world, grow strong</u> , and I will speak only this time. Perhaps ten may be found there; <u>and I and they will pray for mercy upon all the land, and You will forgive them</u> . And He said, I will not destroy for the sake of the ten who may be innocent.
Latin Vulgate	I beseech you, he says, be not angry, Lord, if I speak yet once more: What if ten will be found there? And he said: I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he says, "Do not please [let there] be anger to my Adonai and I will speak only the time: Suppose are found there ten?" And so He says, "I will not destroy because of the ten."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he said, Oh, let not the LORD be displeased, and I will speak only once more; suppose ten shall be found there? And he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said, Will there be anything against me, Lord, if I speak yet once more? But if there should be found there ten? And He said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake.

Significant differences: The targum has a lot of extra text.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Finally, Abraham said, "Please don't get angry, LORD, if I speak just once more. Suppose you find only ten good people there." "For the sake of ten good people," the LORD told him, "I still won't destroy the city."
Easy English	Abraham said, 'Do not be angry, my *Lord. I will ask just once more. If you find 10 *righteous people there, what will happen?'
Easy-to-Read Version	The *Lord said, 'Because of 10 people, I will not ruin it.'
<i>The Message</i>	Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me, but let me bother you this one last time. If you find ten good people there, what will you do?"
New Century Version	He wouldn't quit, "Don't get angry, Master--this is the last time. What if you only come up with ten?" "For the sake of only ten, I won't destroy the city."
New Life Bible	Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me, but let me bother you this one last time. What if you find ten there?" He said, "If I find ten there, I will not destroy it." Then Abraham said, "O may the Lord not be angry. And I may speak once more. What if ten are found there?" The Lord said, "I will not destroy it because of the ten."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Finally, he said, 'Lord; Would you hold it against me if I just say one more thing? What if you were to find just ten [righteous people]?' And he replied, 'I won't destroy it for the sake of ten.'
Ancient Roots Translinear	He said, "Please flare not, Lord as I speak this time: Perhaps, however, ten are found there." And he said, "I will destroy nothing because of ten."

Christian Community Bible	But Abraham insisted, "May my Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found?" And Yahweh answered, "For the sake of ten good people, I will not destroy Sodom."
<i>God's Word™</i>	"Please don't be angry if I speak only one more time," Abraham said. "What if 10 are found there?" He answered, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the 10."
New Jerusalem Bible	He said, 'I trust my Lord will not be angry if I speak once more: perhaps there will only be ten.' 'I shall not destroy it,' he replied, 'for the sake of the ten.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And he said, O let not the Lord be angry and I will say only one word more: by chance there may be ten there. And he said, I will have mercy because of the ten.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	He then said, Let not my LORD be angry now, and I will speak once more; if ten are found there?" And He replied, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten."
HCSB	Then he said, "Let the Lord not be angry, and I will speak one more time. Suppose 10 are found there?" He answered, "I will not destroy it on account of 10."
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	And he said, "Let not my Lord be angry if I speak but this last time: What if ten should be found there?" And He answered, "I will not destroy, for the sake of ten."
Judaica Press Complete T.	And he said, "Please, let the Lord's wrath not be kindled, and I will speak yet this time, perhaps ten will be found there." And He said, "I will not destroy for the sake of the ten."
NET Bible®	Finally Abraham [Heb "he"; the referent (Abraham) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] said, "May the Lord not be angry so that I may speak just once more. What if ten are found there?" He replied, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten."
NIV – UK	Then he said, May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there? He answered, For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And he said, "Let not הוהי be displeased, and let me speak only this time: Suppose there are found ten?" And He said, "I would not destroy it for the sake of ten."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again only this once. Suppose ten [righteous people] shall be found there. And [the Lord] said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is he, "My Lord must not, pray, be hot, when I shall speak, yea, once more. Perhaps will be found there ten. And saying is He, "Not ruin it will I, for the sake of the ten.
Darby Translation	And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, that I speak yet but this time! Perhaps there may be ten found there. And he said, I will not destroy [it] for the ten's sake.
English Standard Version	Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."
exeGesés companion Bible	And he says, Oh Adonay, inflame not; and I word this time only: Perhaps ten be found there. And he says, I ruin not for sake of the ten.

Fred Miller's Revised KJV And he said, Oh let not The LORD be angry and I will speak yet but this once: Perhaps ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

Heritage Bible And he said, Oh let not the Lord burn, and I will speak this stroke only; perhaps ten shall be there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake..

Syndein And he kept on saying {'amar}, "Oh let not 'Adonay/Lord be angry, and I will keep on intensely "communicating categorically doctrine" {dabar - Piel intensive imperfect} yet this once {more}. "Perhaps there exists ten {righteous} found there." And He said, "I will not do/manufacture it {destruction} {'asah - out of divine righteousness and justice} for ten's sake."

A Voice in the Wilderness And he said, Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there? And He said, I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.

Young's Updated LT And he says, "Let it not be, I pray You, displeasing to the Lord, and I speak only this time: perhaps there are found there ten?" and He says, "I do not destroy it , because of the ten."

The gist of this verse: God assures Abraham that He will not destroy Sodom if there are 10 believers there.

Genesis 18:32a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (אֵל or אול) [pronounced low]	not, no	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâ' (אָנֹּ) [pronounced naw]	now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
<p>Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2nd person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Genesis 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Genesis 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Genesis 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word <i>let</i>.</p>			
chârâh (חָרָה) [pronounced khaw-RAWH]	to burn, to kindle, to become angry, to evoke great emotion	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2734 BDB #354
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l']	to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 18:32a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i>]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master];</i> can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated <i>Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10

There are actually 3 forms of this word: 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; 'ădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; and 'ădônîy (אֲדֹנֵי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NEE*].

This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יָיִם) [pronounced *eem*], an older form of the *pluralis excellentiæ* (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1st person singular suffix, hence, *my Lord* (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from *my lords*).

There are points of grammar which speak to the options above, but not so that we may unequivocally choose between the three. (1) When we find 'ădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAH*] (note the difference of the vowel ending), it always means *my lords*. (2) Jehovah calls Himself 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*] in Job 28:28 Isaiah 8:7; however, many of the Job manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* and 8 ancient Isaiah manuscripts read *Y^ehowah* instead. This suggests, that either ancient Scribes were confused about this form of *Adonai* or that they simply substituted *Adonai* for *Y^ehowah*, which was not an abnormal practice (in oral readings, the ancient Tetragrammaton was not spoken, but *Lord* was said instead). And even if *every* manuscript read *Adonai*, then we may also reasonably conclude that one member of the Trinity is addressing another member of the Trinity (although the idea of God saying *my Lord* would be theologically confusing, even if addressing another member of the Trinity; although Jesus did refer to God the Father as *our Father*).

Translation: Then Abraham [lit., *he*] said, "Please, let not my Adonai become angry..."

Like the previous verse, this was cobbled together from two other verses, with the exception of the word *ten* and two words in v. 32b. Abraham has said these words already and God did not strike him dead, so he uses them again. He asks for God not to be angry.

Genesis 18:32b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 18:32b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	1 st person singular, Piel imperfect with a cohortative hê	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
The hê at the end is called a voluntative hê and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i> .			
'ak ^e (אָךְ) [pronounced ahk ^e]	<i>surely, certainly, no doubt, only, but; only now, just now, scarcely; only this once; nothing but, merely [before a substantive]; quite, altogether [before an adjective]</i>	adverb of restriction, contrast, time, limitation, and exception. Also used as an affirmative particle.	Strong's #389 BDB #36
pa'am (פַּעַם) [pronounced PAH-gahm]	<i>beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, time, steps; the connotation is the passage of time</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6471 BDB #821

Translation: ...so I may speak just this one time...

This is where we get some actual new verbiage, which indicates that Abraham is saying this only, and then his prayer on behalf of Lot will end. "Let me speak to you just this one more time; I want to ask only one more thing and then I'm done."

Genesis 18:32c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ûwlay (וַיֹּאמֶר) [pronounced oo-LAHY]	<i>perhaps, unless, suppose; if peradventure</i>	adverb/conjunction	Strong's #194 BDB #19
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to acquire, to be found, to be detected, to be discovered, to be present, to exist</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
'asârâh (עָשָׂר) [pronounced gah-saw-RAW]	<i>ten</i>	feminine numeral	Strong's #6235 BDB #796

Translation: ...—suppose 10 [believers] are found there?”

Now he asks God, *what if there are only 10 believers in the Sodom-Gomorrah area; what then?*

It is odd what one remembers. I am presently listening to the David series by R. B. Thieme, Jr.⁵¹, a portion of which I heard before, and there are many lessons which I must have heard before that I do not recall—not even a little. However, I listened to Bob’s teaching this passage in what is a survey of the Old Testament, probably back as far as 1974 or ‘75, and I still recall him adding up the number of people that Abraham had in mind. There was Lot, his wife, his two young daughters, who had not yet been married; and then Lot had 3 married daughters, and Abraham was certain that Lot would not allow his daughters to marry unbelievers. So that would get us to 10 people. This apparently comes from Abraham stopping with the number 10 here combined with Genesis 19:12–15: *Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? A son-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city." The two angels have come to Lot, to bring him to safety because these cities are about to be destroyed.*

There are two ways to view what these angels are saying. One is, they are just naming at random possible relatives that Lot has, not knowing themselves who is in Lot’s family. A random angel does not know, necessarily, all the particulars of your life. Although they are smart enough to store such information, not every angel follows every single person around to know all about them. However, what these angels ask seems to be fairly specific, suggesting that they may know about Lot and his family in Sodom.

The angels ask about a *son-in-law* in the singular, *sons* (in the plural) and *daughters* (in the plural). So, what appears to be the case is, Lot has an actual son-in-law married to one of his daughters. He has *sons-in-law* who are about to be married to his daughters. He has *sons*, meaning two or more (the dual is not used in that passage, even when speaking of specifically *two daughters*). Now, whereas there is an overlap in our terms *sons* and *sons-in-law*, there is no such overlap in the Hebrew. So this gives us, at minimum, Lot, his wife, a married daughter and her husband; two or more daughters about to be married to two or more men; and two or more sons. At bare minimum, this is 10 people (R. B. Thieme, Jr. totals these up in a slightly different way). Abraham is going to reasonably (but wrongly) assume that Lot would not allow his daughters to marry unbelievers, and he would assume that all of Lot’s children are believers. Therefore, there are at least 10 people who Abraham assume have believed in Jehovah Elohim; and there could be more that Abraham knows about. So, this is why Abraham stopped here. *“What if there are 10 believers in the Sodom-Gomorrah area?” “Then do not worry about it; I will not destroy those cities because of those 10.”*

Genesis 18:32d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (I) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

⁵¹ I write 2–3 hours per day and listen to one hour of teaching as well.

Genesis 18:32d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (אֵל or אֹל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâchath (שָׁחַת) [pronounced shaw-KHAHTH]	<i>to cause one to go to ruin, to spoil, to ruin, to destroy; to corrupt [morally], to pervert</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7843 BDB #1007
ba'ăbûwr (בְּעִבּוּר) [pronounced bah-ġu ^b -VOOR]	<i>because of, for, that, for the sake of, on account of, in order that; while</i>	preposition/conjunction; substantive always found combined with the bêyth preposition; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5668 BDB #721
Actually a combination of the bêyth preposition (<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before</i>) and 'ăbûwr (עִבּוּר) [pronounced ġaw ^v -BOOR] which means <i>a passing over, a transition; the cause of a crossing over; the price [of transferring ownership of something]; purpose, objective</i> . Properly, it is the passive participle of Strong's #5674 BDB #720. Strong's #5668 BDB #721.			
'asârâh (אַשָׁרַח) [pronounced ġah-saw-RAW]	<i>ten</i>	feminine numeral with the definite article	Strong's #6235 BDB #796

Translation: And He said, "I will not destroy [the city] because of the 10."

God reassures Abraham that, if there are 10 believers there, He will not destroy this city.

Now Abraham desists; he has reached a number that comfortably represents to him the number of Lot's household which are saved. He is not worried for Lot and his family and ends his face to face prayer with Yahweh at this point.

v. 32 reads: Then Abraham said, "Please, do not become angry, my Lord, so that I may speak just one more time—suppose that 10 believers are found?" And He said, "I will not destroy the city because of the 10 believers who are there." Abraham has assumed that Lot and his immediate family was comprised of 10 people who believed in Jehovah Elohim. We know that there was Lot, his wife, his 2 daughters at home and their fiancées (Genesis 19:5–14). That would be 6 people. There appears to be a daughter who is already married, so that would be two more; and there appear to be 2 or more sons (Genesis 19:12). That takes our total to 10. Abraham had apparently assumed that Lot and his family have all trusted in Jehovah and that they would have evangelized the 2 fiancées and 1 son-in-law. Surely, the time Lot spent in Sodom could account for 3 additional righteous people outside of his own immediate family. After all, Lot has lived there for 23 years. Abraham may even be aware that Lot has a lofty political position in the city of Sodom; he is a judge.

So there is no misunderstanding, Abraham did not talk God down to 10 people, and, had he just kept going, he would have gotten the number down to 4, and that Sodom and Gomorrah might still be cities today. For the size of the city of Sodom, 10 believers (righteous ones) would have preserved that city—that would have been the bare minimum. So, you may think that New York City or that San Francisco are horribly degenerate cities (and they are, in many respects); there are still a significant number of believers in each city, and those believers preserve those cities. In fact, it is someone ironical that, in both cities, people of faith are often mocked or their churches mocked, but it is because of them that San Francisco and New York City are still cities today.

So, had Abraham said, “What if there are only 4 people? Would You destroy the city for a lack of 6?” And God would have answered, “Yes, I would destroy Sodom, but I would deliver the righteous.”

Genesis 18:32 Then Abraham [lit., he] said, “Please, let not my Adonai become angry so I may speak just this one time—suppose 10 [believers] are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy [the city] because of the 10.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:32 Then Abraham said, “Please, do not become angry, my Lord, so that I may speak just one more time—suppose that 10 believers are found?” And He said, “I will not destroy the city because of the 10 believers who are there.” (Kukis paraphrase)

At one time, Abraham and Lot had so many possessions that their employees were arguing over the ownership of cattle. They had far too many possessions for Abraham and Lot to coexist on the same pastureland; and now, Abraham is counting on Lot and his family to be at least ten people, so that the city of Sodom is preserved. Abraham is not all that concerned for the people of Sodom, whom he knows barely, but for Lot and his family.

It is upon this and many other passages that the concept of a *pivot* is developed (a *pivot* is the number of believers in a geographical area; their number and spiritual advancement determine how God will deal with that geographical area). God has agreed that if there are ten righteous in Sodom, that He would not destroy it. This indicates that the number of believers in a geographical area affects how God deals with the people in that geographical area as a corporate entity. Ten believers in Sodom would have preserved Sodom. However, when we get into Genesis 19, it will be clear that there are four who believe in Y^ehowah Elohim, and that none from this group of four would be considered a spiritual giant.

So, if you are in a congregation of 10 or more people, then you ought to breathe easily tonight, because God is probably not going to allow your city to be destroyed. What we have here is a general rule or a general principle, that God does provide some protection for areas where there are a number of believers. Now, we have no idea as to the overall population of Sodom and Gomorrah. Were there a 1000 people there? 5000? 10,000? We know that they were captured and taken into slavery originally by the Aramæans and others in Genesis 14, but we were not given a number; only how many saved them.

In any case, there is a calculation that must be made, and God makes this calculation based upon His justice and righteousness. There will be believers in a geographical area, growing believers and believers who are mature.

Few people appreciate just how much information is tucked into the book of Genesis.

The Seeds of Many Doctrines Found in Genesis 18

Doctrines	Text/Commentary
Temporal judgement	God does judge nations and cities because of the behavior of its citizenry. God deals with man individually and corporately.
Intercessory Prayer	Abraham is praying on behalf of Lot and his family. Abraham also had a friendly relationship with the king of Sodom (Genesis 14:17, 22–24). We have no idea if this man is still alive.
Mediator	Abraham is acting as a mediator on Lot's behalf. To most people, Lot seems to be a pretty worthless fellow, and his family shows little interest in spiritual matters. That is what Satan tells God about you and I; and Jesus Christ is our Perfect Mediator, Who defends us and speaks on our behalf. Zechariah 3:1–2 1Timothy 2:5 Hebrews 7:25 Revelation 12:10
Prayer	<p>Abraham is praying to God, just as you and I pray to God. Abraham makes it clear that we can pray to God, and base what we ask for on Bible doctrine. Abraham is certain that God will not destroy a city if there are 50 believers in that city. So, that is his starting point, which is immediately confirmed by God.</p> <p>Also, God is a personal God to Abraham; and God listens to Abraham's prayers and answers his prayers. Abraham does not see God as an impersonal force or as a God Who no longer intervenes in human history. God is real and Abraham expects God to hear him and to be reasonable.</p>
Prayer, The Desire Behind	Behind every prayer is a desire. God will consider what Abraham is praying for (sparing the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah) and He considers Abraham's underlying motivation (sparing Lot and his family). God will answer "no" to preserving Sodom and Gomorrah, but He will honor Abraham's underlying motivation and deliver Lot's family.
The Salt principle	Had there been 50 believers in Sodom—if there were just 10 believers in Sodom—God would have preserved Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus tells His disciples " You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become insipid, with what will it [the earth] be seasoned? it is no longer useful, except to be thrown out of doors, and walked upon. " (Matthew 5:13). Salt, in the ancient world, was used to preserve food, as believers with doctrine preserve the earth. However, there is a point at which God will destroy entire cities and nations.
The Pivot and the Influence of Believers in a Society	<p>Believers with doctrine influence a society. A good example of this is the Roman Empire, which began as being very opposed to Christianity, but which became strongly influenced by Christianity. As the Christian Tertullian observed: "We are but of yesterday, yet we fill your cities, islands, forts, towns, councils, even camps, tribes, decuries, the palace, the senate, the forum; we have left you the temples alone." This was accomplished without an armed insurrection against Rome.</p> <p>The norms and standards of believers in Jesus Christ began to filter into the society. Abraham and his people represented a positive influence on the surrounding areas; Lot and his family had almost no influence whatsoever.</p>

The Seeds of Many Doctrines Found in Genesis 18

Doctrines	Text/Commentary
<p>Spiritual Influence rather than Political Influence</p>	<p>Abraham has no political office, yet his influence comes down to us even today. Lot was made a judge in his city, which ultimately had no influence on the preservation of his city.</p> <p>This does not mean that believers ought not to be politicians or be involved in some area of politics; it simply means that Billy Graham had a much more profound affect upon the United States did than, say, President John Kennedy.</p>
<p>God's Judgment of Degeneracy</p>	<p>Degeneracy, such as was found in Sodom and Gomorrah, had reached a point when it was infecting all of society. There was no law enforcement to protect the strangers who had come into Sodom. People obviously knew what was going to happen to these strangers, but no one except Lot offered to step in. No one sought to control this outbreak of degeneracy.</p>

Over and over again, we find in Genesis the seed for some of the most important doctrines from the word of God. It is as if the Author of Genesis actually knew the end from the beginning, and filled the book of Genesis with the seeds for all that would follow.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

And so goes Y^ehowah as when he finished to speak unto Abraham and Abraham returned to his place.

Genesis
18:33

And Y^ehowah departed just as He finished speaking unto Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

Finally, Jehovah departed after He finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his own place.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And <u>the majesty of</u> the Lord went up when He had ceased to speak with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.
Latin Vulgate	And the Lord departed, after he had left speaking to Abraham: and Abraham returned to his place.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so goes Y ^e howah as when he finished to speak unto Abraham and Abraham returned to his place.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD went his way when he had finished communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord departed, when He left off speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.
Significant differences:	Extra text in the targum.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	When the LORD finished speaking with Abraham, he left; but Abraham stayed there in that place.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	After speaking with Abraham, the LORD left, and Abraham went back home. Then the *Lord left when he had finished his conversation with Abraham. And Abraham returned home.
Easy-to-Read Version	The Lord was finished speaking to Abraham, so the Lord left. And Abraham went back to his home.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then the Lord stopped speaking to AbraHam and left, and AbraHam returned to his [tent].
New Jerusalem Bible	When he had finished talking to Abraham Yahweh went away, and Abraham returned home.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And the Lord went on his way when his talk with Abraham was ended, and Abraham went back to his place.
Complete Jewish Bible	ADONAI went on his way as soon as he had finished speaking to Avraham, and Avraham returned to his place.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then the LORD went to do what He had told to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his own place.
HCSB	When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, He departed, and Abraham returned to his place.
NET Bible®	The LORD went on his way [Heb "And the Lord went."] when he had finished speaking [The infinitive construct ("speaking") serves as the direct object of the verb "finished."] to Abraham. Then Abraham returned home [Heb "to his place."].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

A Conservative Version	And LORD went his way as soon as he had left off conversing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.
Darby Translation	And Jehovah went away when he had ended speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.
English Standard Version	And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.
exeGesés companion Bible	...- and Yah Veh goes his way as soon as he finishes wording with Abraham: and Abraham returns to his place.
Heritage Bible	And Jehovah walked his way, when he had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham turned back to his place.
King James 2000 Version	And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left speaking with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.
Syndein	And Jehovah/God kept on going on His way as soon as He had completed intensively "communicating categorically doctrine" {dabar - Piel intensive infinitive} with Abraham. And Abraham returned unto his place. {Note: Now Abraham fought

hard to get the Lord to agree to sparing Sodom if there are only 10 righteous (believers) there. Why? RBT says Abraham was probably counting Lot and His wife (2), plus the two young daughters (4 total), plus Lot's three married daughters (7 total), plus Abraham probably assumed that Lot would not have permitted his three daughters to marry unbelievers, so the husbands would make 3 more, for a total of 10 believers. Only God knows the spiritual status of each creature. Abraham's guess was incorrect - as the following verses will show.}

World English Bible

Yahweh went his way, as soon as he had finished communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Young's Literal Translation

And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

The gist of this verse:

Once Abraham and the Lord finished their discussion, God went His way and Abraham returned to his place.

Genesis 18:33a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'ăsher (אשר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka'ăsher (כאשר) [pronounced kah-uh-SHER] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner, in a manner as</i> . Back in 1Samuel 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i> .			
kâlâh (כלה) [pronounced kaw-LAWH]	<i>to complete, to finish; to prepare; to come to an end; to consume, to waste, to destroy, to annihilate; to make pine away</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #3615 BDB #477
This seems to be a play on words, almost, as this word can be used to mean <i>destroy, annihilate</i> . However, this is not the word used earlier in this passage.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 18:33a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: And Y^ehowah departed just as He finished speaking unto Abraham;...

There are two things that stand out here. There is a way to say, "And Y^ehowah departed after he had finished speaking with Abraham." However, it says that **Jehovah departs just as he finishes speaking to Abraham**. What is suggested is, Jehovah disappears immediately after He is done speaking with Abraham. It is as if, Abraham blinks, and God is gone, or God is on the road, off a ways.

The second thing to notice is the tiny preposition *unto*. This suggests that God has respect for Abraham. If God spoke to me, I doubt that He is going to speak with me as a friend or with respect; but Abraham, God spoke *unto* him; giving Abraham respect.

Genesis 18:33b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996

Genesis 18:33b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâqôwm (מקוֹמ) [pronounced maw-KOHM]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

Translation: ...and Abraham returned to his place.

Abraham had apparently kept walking along with God and was a distance away from his own compound. So, when he realizes that this discussion is over, Abraham then returns to his compound.

Application: God knows how many believers there are in all of the 5 cities and yet he allowed Abraham to bring down the numbers at which God would protect and preserve the area. This allows us to see how our country can be this degenerate and still have God preserve us. We might be under discipline, but God has preserved the United States even though we have been in a downward spiral since the 50's. Many of the parents of the 50's experienced so much prosperity, that they became materialistic and less committed to their families than to their possessions; the children of the 60's reacted with hedonism and decadence and self-centeredness and even some of the their parents joined them. In the 70's and 80's, these 60's children became either highly materialistic, retained their lusts in hedonism and the lack of loyalty and lack of family values, or they became decadent minus the materialism but also retained their lusts in hedonism and lack of loyalty and lack of family values. They changed partners at will, committed adultery, both men and women, left children tragically standing in the wake. In their guilt, they have given their children, or their step-children every material thing known to man, but gave their children no values, no loyalty, no discipline, no character and no time. In fact they were in such guilt, that many would not even spank their own children and sought to restrain others from doing so, falsely believing that nonviolence at every level is the solution to our obvious downward spiral. In a society where we blame environment, we blame guns and we blame families for crime, but refuse to adequately punish the criminals in our misplaced guilt; in a society where half the marriages have one or both partners committing adultery, thus betraying their partner and betraying their children; in a society where over half the marriages fail and a far greater percentage of live-in's break up; in a society where a mind-staggering percentage of 13 and 14 year olds are having sex outside of marriage; where young people begin taking drugs sometimes as pre-teens—God has still preserved our country because there are believers and there are believers who are growing spiritually, and for these few, God has continued to preserve the United States. As we have seen, with intercessory prayer, God will preserve a nation when there are less than 1% believers; however, the degeneracy of the society is almost beyond imagination under those conditions.

Why would a society with a higher percentage of believers like ours tend to be much more degenerate than other societies? There is at least a twofold reason for that: (1) Satan is going to concentrate his attacks on areas where there are a large number of believers; he does not need to attack or influence countries where the believing population is very small or fairly inactive. (2) When a nation has a reasonable number of believers and a reasonable pivot, that nation will be blessed with material prosperity and some people a swayed by material prosperity. It is unfortunate, but some people will not come to God unless they are crushed; I can personally testify

to the truth of that, having been at one of the lowest points in my life when I looked toward God for help and guidance (and, subsequently, perhaps months later, believed in Jesus Christ). We have people dying at very young ages, modern science unable to keep pace with the debilitating diseases running rampant in our country, because sometimes this is the only way that they or members of their family might look to Jesus Christ face to face. I know personally that I might not have ever believed in Jesus Christ had I not been under pressure beyond my ability to deal with it.

Genesis 18:33 **And Y^ehowah departed just as He finished speaking unto Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 18:33 **Finally, Jehovah departed after He finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his own place.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Gen 18:33 And the LORD went His way, when He had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

One more thing needs to be said: we are not guaranteed a never-ending life in our bodies of sin on this earth. We will all die. It is through death that we will be ultimately cleansed of sin. It is through death that we all realize the mortality of our lives and to think about the God Who made us. However, God has a time and a place, and God desires our deaths to be to His glory.

McGee: Do you know that the Great Tribulation period cannot come as long as the church is in the world? It just cannot come, my friend, because Christ bore our judgment, and the great tribulation is part of the judgment that is coming. This is the reason that the church cannot go through it. This is a glorious picture of that truth. We are going to see that Sodom and Gomorrah are a picture of the world - and what a picture! What a condition the world is in today - it is very much like Sodom and Gomorrah. That does not mean that the Lord is going to come tomorrow. I do not know - and no one else knows - when He will come. But He could come tomorrow, and it certainly would be in keeping with the carrying out of the picture which is before us here in Genesis.⁵²

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A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 18:

⁵² From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed January 2, 2014.

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y^ehowah) is represented with the actual Hebrew הוהי. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

Genesis 18:1 And הוהי [= YHWH, Y^ehowah] appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamrë, while he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

There are no actual chapter breaks in the original manuscripts. At the end of Genesis 17, Abraham had been talking to God and he (Abraham) saw to it that every male in his camp would get circumcised. Therefore, even without Abraham being the only male mentioned at the end of Genesis 17, he was primary male mentioned. Therefore, *him* in v. 1 refers to Abraham.

For most of the 13 years of Ishmael's life, God has not appeared to Abraham. However, most recently, God appears to Abraham twice (Genesis 17:1); and in this chapter, a second time. That is because what is taking place is extremely important.

Abraham's tent was found in the midst of a forest of terebinth trees or on the edge of this forest. This would have provided Abraham with the maximum amount of coolness during the warm days.

Genesis 18:2–3 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and saw three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, "הוהי, if I have now found favour in Your eyes, please do not pass Your servant by.

We do not know the exact nature of these three men. We would assume that One of them is God, the Revealed God, based upon v. 1.

Abraham recognizes that one of these men is the Revealed God. He bows down before them.

These three will go to Sodom; and since Genesis 19 speaks of two angels being in Sodom (Genesis 19:1), we would assume that this is God and two angels, all manifest to Abraham as three men. However, Abraham recognizes that One of them is God.

Genesis 18:4 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

In the ancient world, it was common courtesy to wash the feet of someone coming to your tent or your abode.

Genesis 18:5 “And let me bring a piece of bread and refresh your hearts, and then go on, for this is why you have come to your servant.” And they said, “Do as you have said.”

Abraham is going to gather up some food for them, and he will do this before they tell him why they are there.

Genesis 18:6 So Abraham ran into the tent to Sarah and said, “Hurry, make ready three measures of fine flour, knead it and make cakes.”

Abraham asks Sarah to make some fresh bread for his guests.

Genesis 18:7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hurried to prepare it.

Abraham was also going to serve some veal, which is a wonderful tasting meat (I don't know where it can be found anymore).

All of this would have taken some time. My guess is a couple of hours.

Genesis 18:8 And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

Abraham serves them all a meal. A portion of this meal appears to be cottage cheese.

Genesis 18:9 And they said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “See, in the tent.”

They ask about Sarah, which indicates that either Abraham or a servant actually brought the food to these men. Sarah may have cooked or organized the cooking, but she did not come out before these guests. However, that does not mean that she was not interested.

Genesis 18:10 And He said, “I shall certainly return to you according to the time of life, and see, Sarah your wife is to have a son!” And Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.

God tells Abraham, “I will return to you next year and you and your wife will have a son.” Sarah was listening in on this conversation.

Genesis 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age, and Sarah was past the way of women.

Abraham and Sarah were quite old at this time and long past the age of having children. Abraham would not have been potent and Sarah would not be fertile.

Genesis 18:12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, “After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my master being old too?”

Sarah laughs within herself at the thought of this. How could she and her husband have this pleasure at their age?

Genesis 18:13 And הויה said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I truly have a child, since I am old?’

Then God asks Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and question having a child at her age?”

Genesis 18:14 “Is any matter too hard for הוהי? At the appointed time I am going to return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah is to have a son.”

God continues, “Is there anything too hard for Me to do?” He repeats His promise to return to Abraham in about a year.

Genesis 18:15 But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh!”

Sarah says aloud, “I did not laugh.” God corrects her.

Genesis 18:16 And the men rose up from there and looked toward Sedom [= Sodom], and Abraham went with them to send them away.

The men rose up and looked toward Sodom. Abraham walked with them as they went that direction.

Recall that Sodom is where Lot and his wife and two daughters live.

Genesis 18:17–18 And הוהי said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham is certainly going to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?”

God asks the angels, “Should I hide from Abraham what I am doing? Remember that Abraham is going to become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him.”

Genesis 18:19 “For I have known him, so that he commands his children and his household after him, to guard the way of הוהי, to do righteousness and right-ruling, so that הוהי brings to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”

God points out what Abraham had been doing. “After all,” God says, “He commands his children and his household to guard the way of Y^ehowah.”

The plural of *sons* may seem confusing, as Abraham right now only has one son. Furthermore, this cannot refer to the children in his camp, as God calls them *his sons*. The key is the translation of v. 19a:

For I have known him to the end that he will instruct his sons and his household after him... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

There are three words strung together here which mean, when so combined, *to the end*. God knows that Abraham has instructed Ishmael; he will instruct his son Isaac; and he will also instruct Esau and Jacob (his future grandsons). However, Abraham, by preserving the words of God, will instruct all of his future sons. Right now, we are studying the very words of God preserved by Abraham about 4000 years ago.

Genesis 18:20 And הוהי said, “Because the outcry against Sedom and Amorah is great, and because their sin is very heavy,...

God also says that there is an outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah because their sin is so great.

Genesis 18:21 ...“I am going down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me, and if not, I know.”

God knows all that is taking place, but he focuses angelic attention away from Abraham, for a time, and onto Sodom and Gomorrah.

Angels can only be in one place at once, and God had all angelic creation focused upon Abraham. They will view Sodom, by way of contrast.

Genesis 18:22 So the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but הוה still stood before Abraham.

Abraham is aware that there may be great judgment against Sodom, and he knows that Lot and his family are living there (recall that the two troops split up back in Genesis 13).

Genesis 18:23 And Abraham drew near and said, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wrong?”

At this point, Abraham questions God. He asks a general question, “Would You destroy the justified man side-by-side with the malevolent person?” (I’ve given a more accurate translation here)

Genesis 18:24 “Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city, would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?”

Abraham begins to ask about the pivot. “Let’s say that there are 50 righteous souls in Sodom; would you then destroy it?”

Genesis 18:25 “Far be it from You to act in this way, to slay the righteous with the wrong, so that the righteous should be as the wrong. Far be it from You! Does the Judge of all the earth not do right?”

Abraham answers his own question. “Certainly not.”

Genesis 18:26 And הוה said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I shall spare all the place for their sakes.”

God confirms that he is correct in his understanding of the application of God’s justice.

Genesis 18:27 And Abraham answered and said, “Look, please, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to הוה,...

Abraham correctly understands who and what he is before God, but he presses further this issue with God.

Genesis 18:28 “Suppose there are five less than the fifty righteous, would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?” And He said, “If I find there forty-five, I do not destroy it.”

Let’s say that there are only 45 justified believers in Sodom. Would you destroy the entire city?” God answers, “No.”

Genesis 18:29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, “Suppose there are found forty?” And He said, “I would not do it for the sake of forty.”

“Let’s say there are forty believers; what about then?” And God says He would not destroy the city.

Genesis 18:30 And he said, "Let not הוהי be displeased, and let me speak: Suppose there are found thirty?" And He said, "I would not do it if I find thirty there."

Abraham drops this number down to thirty, and God says that He would not destroy the city for the thirty.

Genesis 18:31 And he said, "Look, please, I have taken it upon myself to speak to הוהי: Suppose there are found twenty?" And He said, "I would not destroy it for the sake of twenty."

Abraham says, "What about twenty?" God says. "I would preserve the city for twenty believers."

Genesis 18:32 And he said, "Let not הוהי be displeased, and let me speak only this time: Suppose there are found ten?" And He said, "I would not destroy it for the sake of ten."

Finally, Abraham gets down to the number ten and God assures him that He will not destroy Sodom if there are ten believers there. We know that any person who has believed in the Revealed God is righteous, as per Genesis 15:6.

Abraham knows that Lot, his wife and his two daughters are all believers. Now, you will recall that Abraham and Lot split up when they were both too prosperous and could not keep all of their material gains separate. Abraham knows how many servants and hired help have gone with Lot and his family. Given the size of Abraham's camp, Abraham probably assume that, if anything, Lot's slaves increased. How many did he have when splitting up with Abraham? I would not be surprised if there were forty-six or more. So, even with the number that Abraham began with, he was certain that God could not destroy Sodom, no matter what is going on with Lot at this time. Abraham has continued to prosper and he assumes that same has been true of Lot.

Genesis 18:33 Then הוהי went away as soon as He had ended speaking to Abraham. And Abraham returned to his place.

As it turns out, there are only four righteous souls in all of Sodom; and one of them will look back longingly.

Now, let's say Moses kept pushing this, and he got down to only four. God would have said, "For that few, I will destroy the city."

When it comes to the pivot of a nation, God looks at two things: (1) how many of these are saved and (2) how many of them are in a state of spiritual maturity? This is key in the preservation of any city or state or country.

At one time in the United States, if anyone asked me, "Do we need to move to Texas to experience spiritual growth?" Of course I would have said *no*. However, there are fewer and fewer believers throughout the United States; and far fewer doctrinal believers. This may be a time in the history of our country when you want to live near a doctrinal church, simply as a matter of personal safety. This does not mean that God will not protect you individually wherever you are. God will protect Lot and his family. God does protect His Own. But I could not say what sort of judgment will come upon you if you live in, say, California. In the past few years (decades), they have suffered great forest fires. Even if you are a hundred miles from the nearest fire, its smoke often hung like a blanket for weeks at a time all over places in the state.

Addendum

This is a doctrine rich chapter, so not all of the lessons which we learned are included in this collection.

What We Learn from Genesis 18

1. We studied the doctrine of angelology.
2. We studied the many parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Jesus.
3. We have seen examples of “contradictions” in the Bible; and that most of them can be answered or explained. We have also noticed that they can be very dishonest as well.
4. We have studied the erotesis, which is used several times in this chapter.
5. We see how this chapter illustrates the believer who is asleep and the believer who is in fellowship and who has an impact on the plan of God.
6. We discussed the destruction of huge populations.
7. We looked at, *who would you vote for, between Jimmy Carter and Mitt Romney?*
8. Angels observe us like a big budget movie.
9. Abraham, who has never run for office, owned a plot of land, or had a position of authority in anything other than his own company, has more influence in that area than any other man. Lot, who became a judge where he lived, is one of the least important men to his area and in human history.
10. We have studied in some detail the gay agenda in the United States and how this relates to this passage and the next chapter.
11. We went into great detail studying political activism and how bringing it into the Black church decimated the spiritual lives of many believers.
12. We saw how political activism was not the solution to anything. It is not a permanent solution.
13. We saw how we, as a democracy, have elected gutless, dishonest leaders. We too often elect people who look good and tell us what we want to hear.
14. We learned not to indulge in drugs, even if they are made legal.
15. We learned what it means to love our neighbor.
16. We have studied the Christian nation, the client nation, the pivot, and the spinoff.
17. We looked at the Declaration of Independence in the light of Bible doctrine.
18. Our founding fathers understood that having maximum freedom required personal morality.
19. We found out why Muslims need particularly tough rulers in order to keep the people in line.
20. We studied the doctrine of heathenism.
21. We studied why the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had clear choices, both to believe in the God of Abraham and secondly to behave in a moral fashion.
22. We contrasted the cities of Sodom and Salem.
23. We learned why God asks certain questions.
24. Not only did we examine Sodom and Gomorrah and Salem, but we applied this information to a variety of contemporary countries to explain why they are they that they are.
25. We studied why God demands to be glorified.
26. We looked at the fallen angels and discussed why God cannot simply give them a piece of the universe and let them hang there.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

Josephus' History of this Time Period

CHAPTER 11.

HOW GOD OVERTHREW THE NATION OF THE SODOMITES, OUT OF HIS WRATH AGAINST THEM FOR THEIR SINS.

1. ABOUT this time the Sodomites grew proud, on account of their riches and great wealth; they became unjust towards men, and impious towards God, insomuch that they did not call to mind the advantages they received from him: they hated strangers, and abused themselves with Sodomitical practices. God was therefore much displeased at them, and determined to punish them for their pride, and to overthrow their city, and to lay waste their country, until there should neither plant nor fruit grow out of it.

2. When God had thus resolved concerning the Sodomites, Abraham, as he sat by the oak of Mambre, at the door of his tent, saw three angels; and thinking them to be strangers, he rose up, and saluted them, and desired they would accept of an entertainment, and abide with him; to which, when they agreed, he ordered cakes of meal to be made presently; and when he had slain a calf, he roasted it, and brought it to them, as they sat under the oak. Now they made a show of eating; and besides, they asked him about his wife Sarah, where she was; and when he said she was within, they said they would come again hereafter, and find her become a mother. Upon which the woman laughed, and said that it was impossible she should bear children, since she was ninety years of age, and her husband was a hundred. Then they concealed themselves no longer, but declared that they were angels of God; and that one of them was sent to inform them about the child, and two of the overthrow of Sodom.

3. When Abraham heard this, he was grieved for the Sodomites; and he rose up, and besought God for them, and entreated him that he would not destroy the righteous with the wicked. And when God had replied that there was no good man among the Sodomites; for if there were but ten such man among them, he would not punish any of them for their sins, Abraham held his peace. And the angels came to the city of the Sodomites, and Lot entreated them to accept of a lodging with him; for he was a very generous and hospitable man, and one that had learned to imitate the goodness of Abraham. Now when the Sodomites saw the young men to be of beautiful countenances, and this to an extraordinary degree, and that they took up their lodgings with Lot, they resolved themselves to enjoy these beautiful boys by force and violence; and when Lot exhorted them to sobriety, and not to offer any thing immodest to the strangers, but to have regard to their lodging in his house; and promised that if their inclinations could not be governed, he would expose his daughters to their lust, instead of these strangers; neither thus were they made ashamed.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-1.htm> accessed January 4, 2014. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 1, Chapter 11.

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Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant.

This comes from Chapter , entitled *The Flood*.

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 18

CHAPTER 13

The Twofold Promise of "a Seed" to Abraham - Ishmael - Jehovah visits Abraham - The Destruction of Sodom - Abraham's Sojourn at Gerar - His Covenant with Abimelech (Genesis 15-20, 21:22-34)

While Abraham's faith was thus exercised and blessed, the "evil men and seducers," among whom Lot had chosen his dwelling, had been waxing worse and worse, and rapidly filling up the measure of their iniquity. That judgment which had long hung over them like a dark cloud was now to burst in a terrible tempest. Abram was sitting "in the tent door in the heat of the day," when Jehovah once more appeared in visible form to him. This time it was, as it seemed, three wayfarers, whom the patriarch hastened to welcome to the rest and refreshment of his abode. But the heavenly Guests were the Lord Himself (See Genesis 18:13) and two angels, who were to be the ministers of His avenging justice. There can be no doubt that Abraham recognized the character of his heavenly Visitors, though, with the delicacy and modesty so peculiarly his, he received and entertained them according to the manner in which they presented themselves to him. The object of their visit was twofold - the one bearing reference to Sarah, the other to Abraham. If Sarah was to become the mother of the promised seed, she also must learn to believe. (Hebrews 11:11) Probably she had not received quite in faith the account which Abraham had given of his last vision of Jehovah. At any rate, the first inquiry of the three was after Sarah. The message of the birth of a son was now addressed directly to her; and as her non-belief appeared in her laughter, it was first reproved and then removed. The first object of their visit accomplished, the Three pursue their way towards Sodom, accompanied by Abraham. Now it was that Jehovah Himself (Genesis 18:17) opened to the patriarch the other purpose of their coming. It was to tell him the impending doom of the cities of the plain, and that for two reasons: because Abraham was the heir to the promises, and because he would "command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment." From the latter words we gather that the doom of Sodom was communicated to Abraham that it might serve as a warning to the children of Israel. It was not to be regarded as an isolated judgment; but the scene of desolation, which was for ever to occupy the site of the cities of the plain, would also for ever exhibit to Israel the consequences of sin, and be to them a type of future judgment. It is in this light that the Scriptures both of the Old and the New Testament present to us the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. On the other hand, as God had in the covenant made gift of the land to Abraham and to his seed, it seemed fitting that he should know of the terrible desolation which was so soon to spread over part of it; and that in his character as the medium of blessing to all, he should be allowed to intercede for their preservation, as formerly he had been called to fight for their deliverance. It was therefore neither on account of the intimate converse between God and Abraham, nor yet because Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was involved in the catastrophe, but strictly in accordance with God's covenant - promise, that God made a communication of the coming judgment to Abraham, and that he was allowed to plead in the case.

From <http://www.lewendwater.org/books/v1bhot.pdf> accessed January 4, 2014.

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It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Genesis 18

A Reasonably Literal Translation

A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

Abraham Entertains Y^ehowah Elohim and Two Angels

A Complete Translation of Genesis 18	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Y ^e howah appears unto Abraham [lit., <i>him</i>] by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day.	Jehovah appeared to Abraham by the Oaks of Mamre while he was sitting at the opening of his tent in the heat of the day.
Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up [lit., <i>and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks</i>] and, behold, [there are] three men standing beyond [over?] him. So he looks and then he runs to meet them from the opening of the tent.	Abraham looked up and suddenly saw three men over him. So he looks again and then he runs from his tent entrance to meet them.
Then he bowed down toward the earth, and said, "My Lords, if indeed I have found grace in Your eyes, please do not pass away from Your servant. Please let a little water be brought [to you] and then you [all] will wash your feet and rest underneath the tree. And I will fetch a bit of bread while you [all] refresh your hearts. Afterwards, you will pass on, since you have passed by your servant."	When he got to them, he then bowed down toward the earth, and said, "My Lords, if I have indeed found grace in Your sight, then please do not pass away from Your servant. Please allow me to bring a little water to you so that you can wash your feet and then rest underneath the tree. Let me fetch a little bread while you all refresh your hearts. Then, afterwards, you may pass on, it is for this rest and a meal that you have come across your servant."
And they said, "So you will do just as you have proposed."	And they replied, "Okay, then, we accept your offer."
Abraham then hurried to the tent to Sarah and he said, "Quickly prepare 3 seahs of fine flour; [then] knead [it] and prepare bread-cakes." Then Abraham ran to the herd and he took a calif, tender and healthy [lit., <i>good</i>], and gave [it] to the young servant boy, and he quickly prepared it. Then he took yogurt, milk and the veal [lit., <i>calf</i>] which he had prepared and placed [these things] before them. Then he stands by them under the tree while they eat.	Abraham then hurried to the tent, to Sarah, and he said to her, "Quickly prepare 3 seahs of the finest flour; and then knead it and prepare bread-cakes." Then Abraham ran to the herd and selected a tender and healthy calf and then gave it to his young servant boy, who quickly prepared it. Then Abraham took yogurt, milk and the veal which had been prepared and placed these things before them. Then he stood under the tree nearby while they ate.
God Makes It Clear to Sarah that She Will Soon Bear Abraham's Son	
Then they asked him, "Where [is] Sarah your wife?" And he answered, "Observe, [she is] in the tent." Then He said, "I will certainly return to you as the time [of] life, and, observe, Sarah, your wife, [will have] a son [lit., <i>a son to Sarah, your woman</i>]."	When they asked him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" he answered, "There, in the tent." Then He said, "I will definitely return to you in the spring, and, take note, Sarah, your wife, will have a son at that time."

A Complete Translation of Genesis 18	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
And Sarah was listening [at] the door of the tent (and it was behind Him). Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old and advancing in years [lit., <i>the days</i>] [and] the mode of life as women [i.e., <i>fertility</i>] had ceased to be for Sarah. Therefore, Sarah laughed to herself [lit., <i>in her midst</i>], saying [i.e., <i>thinking to herself</i>], “After I have been physically used up, will I have sexual enjoyment? Furthermore, my lord is old.”	And Sarah was listening from the door of the tent which was behind Him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advancing in years and the manner of women [i.e., <i>fertility</i>] had ceased in Sarah’s life. Therefore, Sarah laughed within, thinking, “Will I enjoy sexual pleasure at my age? Even my lord is too old for that!”
Then Y ^e howah said to Abraham, “Why is it that [lit., <i>why this</i>] Sarah laughed? [Why did she] say, ‘Will I indeed give birth though I am old?’ ” Is [this] matter more extraordinary than Y ^e howah? Regarding the specific time [for this birth], I will return to you, as the time [of] renewal [i.e., <i>Spring</i>]; and Sarah will have a son [lit., <i>to Sarah, a son</i>].”	Then Jehovah said to Abraham, “Why is it that Sarah just laughed? Why did she previously say, ‘Will I indeed give birth even though I am old?’ ” Is there anything too difficult for Jehovah? Regarding this specific time, I will return to you in the Spring, and then, Sarah will have a son.”
And Sarah lied, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. Therefore, He said, “Wrong [lit., <i>no</i>], for you did laugh.”	So Sarah lied, saying, “I did not laugh,” because she was afraid to admit it. However, Y ^e howah said, “Wrong, you did laugh.”
God’s Impending Judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah	
So the men arose from there and they looked out against the face of Sodom, as Abraham was walking with them to send them off.	So the men arose from there and they were looking towards Sodom, as Abraham was walking with them to see them off.
Then Y ^e howah said, “Should I keep concealing from Abraham that [which] I am doing? Furthermore, Abraham will definitely be a great and powerful people and all nations of the earth are blessed in [possibly, <i>by</i>] him. For I have known him to the end that he will instruct his sons and his household after him to [lit., <i>and</i>] keep [guard, preserve] the way of Y ^e howah; to do righteousness and justice so that Y ^e howah might bring to pass regarding Abraham that [which] He proclaimed concerning him.”	Then Jehovah said, “Should I continue to conceal from Abraham that which I am about to do? Furthermore, Abraham will definitely be a great and powerful nation; and all of the nations of the earth will be blessed by him. For I have known him to the end that he will instruct his descendants and his household after him to guard and preserve the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice so that Jehovah might bring to pass regarding Abraham all that He promised him.”
Then Y ^e howah said, “Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very weighty, then I ought to go down now and see whether, according to her crying out—the [crying out] coming to Me, they have manufactured complete destruction [or, ... <i>then I will go down and see whether they have done all according to the crying out [which is] coming to Me;...</i>]; and, if not, I should know.”	Then Jehovah said, “Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is so exceedingly grievous, then I ought to go down now to see whether they have manufactured a complete destruction, as is Sodom’s crying out which has come to Me. If not, then I should know that as well.”

A Complete Translation of Genesis 18	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Abraham's Intercessory Prayer on Behalf of Lot and His Family	
So the men turned from there and walked toward Sodom. Yet Abraham stood before Y ^e howah.	So the men turned from there and began walking toward Sodom. However, Abraham stood in front of Jehovah.
Then Abraham drew near and he said, "Will You, in fact, destroy a righteous man with a malevolent man? Suppose there [are] 50 righteous ones in the midst of the city—will You, in fact, destroy and not sustain the place for the sake of 50 righteous ones who are in its midst? Far be it to You from doing such a thing, to kill a righteous [man] like a guilty [man]. That the righteous should be as the guilty—far be it to You! Will not the Judge of the whole earth render [lit., <i>manufacture</i>] a just decision?" And Y ^e howah said, "If I can find 50 vindicated men in Sodom, in the midst of the city, then I will bear [the sin] with regards to the whole place because of them."	Then Abraham approached God, saying, "Will You, in fact, destroy a righteous man while destroying one who is malevolent? Suppose for a moment that there are 50 believers in this city—would You indeed destroy this city and not, instead, bear up this place because there are 50 righteous people who live there? This is impossible for You to do such a thing, to kill a righteous man like a guilty person! That the righteous man should be treated just like the guilty—that is impossible for You! Shouldn't the Judge of the entire earth render a just verdict?" And Jehovah answered him, "If I can find 50 believers in the midst of Sodom, then I will bear their sin because of those righteous believers."
Then Abraham answered and said, "Listen, please: I have chosen to give an opinion unto my Adonai, even [though] I [am but] dust and ashes. "Suppose the 50 righteous are lacking five; will You destroy the entire city because of the five?" And He said, "I will not destroy [the city] if I find there 45 [righteous ones]."	Then Abraham answered Y ^e howah and said, "Listen to me, please; I have chosen to give an opinion unto my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. "Then let's suppose that there are five lacking from this 50; will you still destroy the entire city because of these five?" And He said, "I will not destroy the city if I find 45 believers there."
And still he continues to speak to Him and he says, "Suppose forty are found there." And He answered, "I will not do [this] because of the forty."	But Abraham continues speaking to God, and he asked, "Suppose forty believers are found there." And God answered, "I will not do this thing because of the forty believers who are there."
Then Abraham [lit., <i>he</i>] said, "Please, let not my Adonai become angry so I may speak: suppose 30 [believers] are found there?" And He answered, "I will not do [this thing] if I find 30 [believers] there."	Then Abraham said, "Please, do not become angry, my Lord, so that I may speak: suppose that 30 believers are found?" And He answered, "I will not do this thing if I find 30 believers there."
Then Abraham answered and said, "Listen, please: I have chosen to speak unto my Adonai—suppose 20 [believers] are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy [the city] because of the 20."	Then Abraham answered Yehowah and said, "Listen to me, please; I have chosen to say this unto my Lord—suppose that 20 believers are found?" And He said, "I will not destroy the city because of the 20 believers who are there."

A Complete Translation of Genesis 18	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Then Abraham [lit., he] said, "Please, let not my Adonai become angry so I may speak just this one time—suppose 10 [believers] are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy [the city] because of the 10."	Then Abraham said, "Please, do not become angry, my Lord, so that I may speak just one more time—suppose that 10 believers are found?" And He said, "I will not destroy the city because of the 10 believers who are there."
Jehovah and Abraham Go their Separate Ways	
And Y ^e howah departed just as He finished speaking unto Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.	Finally, Jehovah departed after He finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his own place.
Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Doctrinal Teachers* Who Have Taught Genesis 18			
	Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
R. B. Thieme, Jr.**	1976 Abraham (Genesis 11:26–22:24) (#600)	#92	Genesis 18:19
Ken Reed	https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/		Genesis 38–50
Dr. Robert Dean	https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem		Genesis 1–50
Bill Wenstrom	https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&view=libwritten&selCat=2&Itemid=124		Genesis 1–50
Jack M. Ballinger	http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html		Genesis 1–49
Ron Snider	http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html		Genesis 1–50

* By doctrinal teacher, I mean a man whose primary focus is the teaching of the Word of God, verse-by-verse and book by book. A believer under the teaching of such a man should fully understand the gospel and rebound after less than a month in attendance.

When it comes to teaching, I should think that a 45 minute teaching session would be the bare minimum; and that, at least 3x a week (with provisions for getting teaching in some way on the other days of the week). Although this man may interact or even learn from other teachers, he should clearly be the authority over his church; and the authority over him is the Word of God and God the Holy Spirit (Who guides the pastor in his study).

ICE teaching would also be a part of the package, ICE being an acronym standing for Isagogics (a teaching

of the history of that time in order to understand the context of a passage), Categories (a study of categories of Bible doctrine), and Exegesis (a close study of each passage, word-by-word whenever necessary).

** I can distinctly recall Bob teaching this passage, so maybe he did in more places than simply the Abraham series.

These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Genwsis 18 has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

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