



Genesis 18:1-15

LAUGHTER ACCORDING TO GOD

God brings us to the end of our strength so that we will trust in His ability to do the impossible... It was humanly impossible for Sarah to bear a son. She was already through menopause. In her natural strength, she was barren. That is where the Lord wants us in our relationship with Him, to recognize our weakness so that we will trust His strength. Many people mistakenly think that the reason they struggle in their Christian lives is that they are too weak. That is not so. The reason we struggle in our Christian walk is that we do not recognize our own weakness for what it is, and so we trust in ourselves rather than in the Lord. When we see our weakness and cast ourselves on the Lord's strength, then we're strong. God doesn't help those who help themselves. God helps those who are helpless. When they helped themselves, Abraham and Sarah came up with Hagar and Ishmael. When they were helpless, God gave them Isaac.

—Steven Cole

Genesis 18-19 form one story in the life of Abraham with all the events in these two chapters occurring in a span of a little more than 48 hours (except the actual births of Lot's daughters' sons, 19:36-38).

- A **Miraculous Birth of Isaac Revealed** (18:1-15)
 - B Abraham's Visitors Look Toward Sodom (18:16)
 - C Yahweh Considers Judgment on Sodom (18:17-21)
 - D Abraham Intercedes for Sodom (18:22-33)
 - E Angels Visit Lot in Sodom (19:1-3)
 - F **Sodom's Great Sin against Yahweh** (19:4-14)
 - E Angels Rescue Lot from Sodom (19:15-16)
 - D Lot Pleads for Zoar (19:17-22)
 - C Yahweh Executes Judgment on Sodom (19:23-26)
 - B Abraham Looks Toward Sodom (19:27-29)
- A **Incestuous Births of Moab and Ammon Revealed** (19:30-38)

THE LORD VISITS ABRAHAM (18:1-3)

- *The Lord appeared to him...* (12:1, 7; 15:1; 17:1; 18:1).
- The Lord appeared to Abraham in human form.
- Abraham recognized Him as the Lord (cf. John 8:56).

We Jews for centuries have objected to the Trinity, labeled it pagan, and said, "Well, it's clear the core of Christianity doesn't come out of the Tanakh." Actually, that's not true. To my surprise, I came to the conclusion—somewhat to my dismay—that we Jews have no theological right to object to the Trinity. Fundamentally, the theological model used by Christianity is a model that shows up in our own sacred literature.

—Dr. Benjamin D. Sommer

18:2a. *The drawn-out description focuses the reader's attention on Abraham's deliberate, fixed gaze and indicates that what he is seeing is significant.* —NET Bible

The "three men" were the LORD and two angels who later visited Lot (19:1). If Abraham had previously met the Angel of the Lord, it seems likely he would have recognized Him at once (cf. 17:1, 22).

—Thomas Constable

Adonai. "My Lord." Abraham uses the distinctive term for God (18:3). The term "my lord," used to show respect to another human, is different in Hebrew (*adoni*) (cf. 23:6).

ABRAHAM WELCOMES THE LORD (18:4-8).

- Abraham shows great _____.
- Abraham shows great _____.
- Abraham shows great _____.
 - He offers _____.
 - He offers a _____.
 - He offers his _____.

SARAH LAUGHS AT THE LORD'S PROMISE (18:9-12)

- The Lord gives Sarah an incredible promise.
- Sarah gives the Lord an incredulous laugh.

GOD

Sarah's Circumstances

THE LORD REAFFIRMS HIS PROMISE TO SARAH (18:13-15)

- Why do we doubt God's Word?
- Why do we diminish God's power?
- Why do we deny our weakness?

True hospitality consists of giving the best of yourself to your guests.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

In a number of ancient civilizations, hospitality was viewed as a pillar on which all morality rested.

—Christine D. Pohl

To serve such a rare delicacy to unexpected guests in the middle of the day showed that Abraham well knew who had come to visit him, for almost never was a meal eaten in the heat of the day.

—James Freeman

Faith is the receptive attitude of the soul, begotten and maintained by the grace of God. —F. B. Meyer

Pleasure. Heb., *ednah*, feminine form of *eden*, used only in 18:12. It has the strong connotation of sexual pleasure or related to the process of sexual reproduction.

It was not simply that Sarah had long been infertile but that she was well past menopause too... Sarah describes herself as "worn out," a decrepit old woman. She could certainly not expect to enjoy the pleasures of younger women in being a mother or perhaps even of sexual intercourse with her husband, for he too is quite old. A life of long disappointment had taught her not to clutch at straws. Hopelessness, not pride, underlay her unbelief.

—Gordon J. Wenham

Difficult. Heb., *pala*. "to be wonderful, marvelous, surpassing, extraordinary; to be beyond one's power or understanding."

The unquestionable, decisive fact is that a word of Yahweh was laughed at. —Gerhard von Rad