

Parashat Vayera

Genesis 18:1-22:24

NOVEMBER 15, 2019



SUMMARY

As *Avraham* sits at the opening of his tent--he looks up to see three men. Even though *Avraham* does not know right away that these men are messengers of G'd, he welcomes them warmly. He runs to greet them, invites them to stay, washes their feet, and--with *Sarah's* help-- prepares a great meal for them. After they are appropriately welcomed and settled, the visitors announce to *Sarah* and *Avraham* that a son will be born to them.

G'd then tells *Avraham* that G'd will destroy the two cities of *S'dom* and *Amorrah* because of the wickedness and injustice of the people who live there. *Avraham* argues with G'd, asking if G'd would destroy people who behave well along with those who behave badly. In the end G'd agrees not to destroy the cities if 10 people who behave well can be found there. G'd cannot find even 10 people who behave well, so G'd destroys the cities. *Avraham's* nephew, *Lot*, and his family are saved. Even though G'd told her not to look back, when she was settled safely in a new town far away, *Lot's* wife did look back to see the cities that G'd had begun to destroy. She turned into a pillar of salt.

Sarah became uncomfortable with the way that *Yishma'el* is playing with *Yitzhak* and tells *Avraham*. *Avraham* then sends *Hagar* and their son *Yishma'el* away. *Avraham* then hears G'd's command to bring his son, *Yitzhak*, as an offering, but he is stopped just in time before he actually sacrifices *Yitzhak*. *Avraham* sacrifices a ram instead.

From Our Commentators:

Ibn Ezra

אל תביט אחריך. אתה וכל אשר לך וכו'
לא תאכל ממנו

DO NOT LOOK BACK--You and all yours, in this way will you not be consumed by it

Chizkuni

אל תביט אחריך בשביל צער חתניך שבעיר ורוץ מהרה לדרכך ואל תפסיק להסתכל אנה ואנה כי הענן עולה ובו אש וגפרית ומתפשט בכל הארץ.

Do not look behind you; because of the sorrow you will feel for your in-laws left in the city. Run quickly on your way and do not stop to look at anything, for the cloud is above and fire and brimstone are in it and it is spreading out across the whole area

FOR DISCUSSION:

1) This week we read that G'd cannot find 10 right-acting people in the cities of *S'dom* and *Amorrah*, so G'd takes *Avraham's* nephew, *Lot*, and his family out of that area to safety. G'd sends angels, just as the sun is coming up, to tell them to leave--but they stop and wait. Why would they wait and not leave right away?

2) Why do you think the angels told *Lot* and his family not to look back at the cities of *S'dom* and *Amorrah* that were to be destroyed?

3) After the angels took *Lot's* family out of *S'dom* and they were safe in a small village nearby, G'd began to destroy *S'dom* and *Amorrah*. Then *Lot's* wife looked back, and she turned to a pillar of salt. Why salt? What do you think G'd might have been saying by turning her to a pillar of salt?

