

Torah: B'resheet (Genesis) 18:1-22:24 Haftarah: Malakhim Bet (2 Kings) 4:1-37 B'rit Hadashah: Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19		<i>year 1</i> 18:1-33	<i>year 2</i> 19:1-20:18	<i>year 3</i> 21:1-24
	1	18:1 – 5	19:1 – 11	21:1 – 4
	2	18:6 – 8	19:12 – 20	21:5 – 13
	3	18:9 – 14	19:21 – 29	21:14 – 21
	4	18:15 – 21	19:30 – 38	21:22 – 34
	5	18:22 – 26	20:1 – 8	22:1 – 8
	6	18:27 – 30	20:9 – 14	22:9 – 19
	7	18:31 – 33	20:15 – 18	22:20 – 24

and HaShem appeared to him by the Oaks of Mamre / and he sat in the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day	<i>vayera elav ADONAI be'Elonéy Mam're ve'hu yoshev pétakh-ha'óhel ke-khom ha'yom</i>	וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלֵי מְמָרָא וְהוּא יָשֵׁב פֶּתַח־הָאֵהֶל כְּחֵם הַיּוֹם:
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This portion includes the promise of a son for Sarah, the birth of that son, Yitz'khaq, the destruction of S'dom and 'Amorah, casting out Sarah's servant Hagar and her son, Yish'mael, born to Avraham, alliance with Avimelech, the binding of Yitz'khaq as a burnt offering, and the birth of Yitz'khaq's future wife Rebecca.

The haftarah is the story of the hospitality of a woman toward the prophet Elisha, paralleling the hospitality of Abraham toward three "men" (angels).

Aliyah Summaries

- Gen. 18:1-5 Part 1: Life and Legacy;** HaShem appears to Avraham with no verbal statement; in v.3 all verbs are in the singular in 4-5 they are plural. "Hospitality to travelers is greater than welcoming God's presence." b. Shabbat 127a
- Gen. 18:6-8** "Such is the way of the righteous; they promise little but perform much." (b.Bava Metsia 87a). Avraham personally and attentively serves rich fare, a princely meal, as if to representatives of deity.
- Gen. 18:9-14** This question is a polite formality toward Avraham in order to enter into conversation with Sarah (Ge. 3:9). The promise of natural children had already been given to Avraham (Ge. 15:4) through Sarah (Ge. 17:16-21) and now unfolds with a due date. The Hebrew emphasizes a singular speaker, and his statement is not literal ("I will return..."), but certifies the prediction. Laughter literally frames the narrative of promise (Ge. 17:17 < Ge. 18:12).
- Gen. 18:15-21 Part 2: Death and Destruction** – Sarah's human weakness/fear are not hidden, just as Avraham's are not (Ge. 12:12 < Ge. 20:11). We see God's divine promise (Part 1) and his justice to and through humanity (Part 2). These are life and death issues. Sin (Ge. 13:13) leads to outcry (Ge. 18:20, Ex. 22:21-23, Is. 5:7), then judgment (Jer. 23:14, Eze. 16:49). Who has cried out? The oppressed! As with the story of The Flood, there must have been an existing moral standard that all humans were expected to follow.
- Gen. 18:22-26** Avraham takes a stand for welfare of others, known and unknown to him. This is a quality of justice that will be passed on to his children (Ge. 18:19).
- Gen. 18:27-30** Avraham speaks with humility and deference.
- Gen. 18:31-33** The number ten represents totality and the minimum effective community. A *minyan* (מִנְיָן) is a quorum of ten Jewish adults required to fulfill certain obligations such as prayer. It literally means "to count" (Da. 5:25, Ten Spies – Nu. 14:27, Ten city rulers – Ruth 4:2, Ten sons of Jacob go to Egypt, etc.)

Thought Focus

Theme: A Moral God – God judges everyone equally – he is not capricious. This is another tremendous innovation of Torah. He acts based on his moral standard established just as surely as the laws of physics that govern the universe. When the scales of justice tip too far, judgment falls. But God always checks the scales and looks for humans who will participate with him. He spoke to Noakh and now to Avraham – and both responded to

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bring a path to salvation and blessing. God never judges without verifying the facts. He not only sees the wickedness of man's heart (Ge. 6:5) and their schemes (Ge. 11:4-5), but the outcry of the oppressed (Ge. 18:20-21) because he cares more about how we treat each other than how we treat him. When people no longer know the difference between good and evil (Is. 5:20), repentance is not possible, and God's judgment is required. But even in the rubble of judgment hope is kept alive – from the survivors of the destruction of S'dom and 'Amora will come the seed of Messiah! (From Lot and his daughter comes Mo'av, the ancestor of Ruth)

To be known/chosen: Part 1 and Part 2 hinge on God being intimate (יָדָע - *yadah* - to know) with Avraham (Ge. 18:19) and interaction with God (Amos 3:7, Je. 23:18), expressing God's love (justice) for all humanity (e.g. Jonah 1:1). Avraham's role is key as the founder of the future nation of Israel. This particularity will be the repository for God communicating eternal righteousness and justice to the world. Like Avraham, we are known by our behavior (Mat. 7:23).

Compassion/Justice: Avraham expresses compassion and justice for all mankind with the desire to make God's name great. This is unlike Noakh who did not question God's actions. "Anyone who has compassion for God's creatures, it is known that he is of the descendants of Abraham, our father, and anyone who does not have compassion for God's creatures, it is known that he is not of the descendants of Abraham, our father." Beitzah 32b. Note that, like the story of Noakh, there is no suggestion of repentance, as there will be in the story of Jonah.

Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

1. (18:1) Has God appeared to you in the pressures and pain of your life? He desires to visit you in the "heat of the day!" (Psa 139:7-12)
2. (18:15) Have you ever been "afraid" when God speaks a possible outcome in your life? Did you laugh? Did you cry? Or did you respond in faith? (Luk 1:8-20)
3. (19:1) Are you responding to His messengers? Is it time to turn from something in your life before it is too late? He desires restoration! (Isa 55:6-7, Amo 5:4-6, 2Pe 3:9, Heb 9:27, 2Co 6:1-2, Psa 69:13-15)
4. (19:24) God is patient, but ultimately judgement will come (Luke 12:20, Acts 5:5). He will come when you are not expecting Him, but you can be ready. Are you? (Mat 24:44-46)
5. (21:6) Are the signs of God's Kingdom evident around you? Don't look for flash and hype, but rather the fruit of changed lives!
6. (21:22) Is God "with" you? If He is, who can be against you? (Rom 8:31, Phi 2:13, Zec 8:23)
7. (22:2) What is more important to you, God, or His promises? (Rom 4:19-12, Psa 27:4-5, Mat 22:37-39)