



#4 Vayera Genesis 18:1-22:24
Torah Study
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Names

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed
Moshe – Moses
Shaul – Paul
S'dom and Amora – Sodom and Gomorrah
Yeshua – Jesus' real name
Yĕhōvāh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)
Yitz'chak – Isaac
Yochanan – John

Terms

Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah
Vayera - 4th Torah portion

Stay refreshed in God. Worldly pressures do not bring peace. Since God has good intentions for us, it makes sense to follow His commandments. That is how we remain at peace. These verses in Proverbs are often quoted and explain this a little deeper.

Proverbs 3:1-10 NKJV

Do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty.

As we can see, these verses show us a better way to live than being controlled by worldly ways. Worldly ways keep us from the peace and goodness of God. Worldly ways are not the ways of God. These scriptures have to do with keeping God's commandments. There are some who think they are to just trust in God without doing what He says. Ya'akov said in James 2:18-19 NKJV, "But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" The Bible teaches we are to keep His commandments.

In these verses, it first of all says to not forget God's law and to make them deeply part of our lives. They can give us a longer life and peace. Keeping God's laws can do that because they are laws given by an all-knowing creator God who give us truths for life. He gives them to us because He has our best interests at heart and cares about mankind. Therefore, God's laws are an act of His mercy and kindness. We are to be tied to them, be bound to them; we

are to write them on the fleshy tablet of our heart so they are part of us.

Therefore, trust in God with all that is in you and do not try to pretend to be wiser than God and make up your own ways on how to live. Seek the right path in life like our father Abraham. Do things God's way so that your ways are led by God. Have a deep respect for God and who He is and do not follow evil ways and sin. God's ways can give you better health. Also give due respect to God for all He gives us by giving what is due Him financially. He is able to help us and provide for us abundantly.

So, get control over your life and enjoy the blessings God gives us through His commandments. The things of this world can weigh us down. Allow God and His ways and doing things God's way to lift you up. Protect your heart from worldly ways and do not let them into your life. Do not hold onto darkness; hold onto God. Philippians 2:15-16 NKJV says, "Become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life." What are the words of life? They are the commandments of God that are given by a good God. It is these commandments that are "right and good" according to Deuteronomy 6:17-18.

So much is dependent on our putting God and His commandments in their proper place in our lives. In that way we also put God in His proper place in our lives. Do not be confused by those who say that God's commandments do not apply anymore. As we can see, they are contradicting what God says. Those who contradict what it is saying believe they are wiser than God. They may say they believe in God and are not contradicting God, but their actions and teachings are evil because they have lifted up their own ideas and theology against what God's word says in the Bible.

The following scripture in Deuteronomy refers to a matter involving a court case. A matter is to be established by testimony. What is the testimony of great believers of the past?

Deuteronomy 19:15 NKJV says, "By the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established."

Witness one, Yeshua the Messiah.

Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

The word translated lawlessness in the Greek is the word not to keep the Torah which are the first 5 books of the Bible. Nomia is the Greek used for the Torah by the ancient rabbis. Anomia is the negation of that which is translated lawlessness, namely to not keep the Torah. So Yeshua said to those who do not keep the Torah, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

Witness two, Shaul.

Romans 3:31 NKJV

Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Shaul said that the law is still in effect. He says that it is "certainly not" done away with.

Witness three, Yochanan.

1 John 3:4,8 NKJV

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

Again in 1 John, the word for lawlessness is to not keep the Torah, *anomia*. Not keeping the Torah is sin and sin is of the devil. Therefore, not keeping the Torah is of the devil.

Witness four, Ya'akov.

James 1:25 The Epistle of James (Ya'akov) A Translation from the Hebrew, by Dr. Miles Jones. Page 24.

But anyone who observes himself by the whole Torah, which is the instruction of the Examiner, and stands in Torah, not hearing it [the Torah] in forgetfulness, for if he works the work, his happiness is in his actions.

In the Hebrew James, it says God, the Examiner, will judge us by the Torah. Heretics changed the Greek to "law of liberty" instead of the word Torah. They did this for the Roman Empire so the Roman Empire could teach their own false doctrine. This has been passed down into Christianity and there are other scriptures that are suspect of being tampered with by heretics.

Witness five, God.

Deuteronomy 4:5a,6 NKJV

I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me.

Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'

God said to keep His commandments. That should end the discussion, but people think they can challenge God and make their doctrine, theology, or ideas to be better than God's ways. It says in Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV that God's commandments are for, "your wisdom and your understanding." The people will see that those who keep God's commandments are, "a wise and understanding people." These are just a few of the scriptures that witness to us that the teaching about God's commandments being done away with is a lie. Also, do not confuse God's commandments with the man-made commandments of Christianity or the Rabbis. They are man-made and not God's commandments. Man-made Christian theology has lots of man-

made ideas in it and even changes what God says and the Jewish rabbis have added their own man-made commandments. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV says, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God."

Some people think that because they go to a building, they are going to learn about God. They may think that going to a building and spending an hour in a pew is spirituality. It is not. People also seem to like entertainment type churches. I asked someone who went to one of these churches if people are getting any biblical truth. His response was that the leadership is helping people to know God a little at a time. I am not sure people are getting closer to God there. If people are not being encouraged to keep God's commandments it is a false church. That is why we need these teachings. Our time is a unique time where we can form communities in homes, online, or through the written teachings we post online.

We also have teachings available from previous years for your encouragement.

Torah Study

We cover different portions or sections of the Torah because that method of study was given us by the prophets; probably Nehemiah. Gentiles believers were to learn and keep the Torah according to the Bible. This scripture is in the context of Gentiles learning to be believers through the weekly sections of the Torah. Acts 15:21 NKJV, "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Vayera means, "and He appeared." This portion begins with Abraham seeing God while he is sitting by his tent door after he is circumcised. Perhaps Abraham was committing his ways to God while he was dealing with the effects of his circumcision. We must all commit ourselves to God at times in our lives. It is at these times we align ourselves with God and we decide to meet God on His terms.

After Abraham has this vision of Yĕhōvāh, he then he lifts up his head and there are three men nearby and he offers them rest and food. People throughout the Old Testament portion have visions and hear from God. For example, God told Noah to build an ark. People in the gospels, and other sections of the New Testament continue to hear from God. Then along comes a man-made idea that God is not involved in the world or with believers. Why would God stop speaking to mankind. Are we too good for that? We need to carefully weigh what God is telling us when we hear from God. God will never tell us to not keep His commandments. We have several teachings online that can help you with this called a Prayer Class: <https://www.teshuvahsa.org/prayer-class>.

It is no wonder that Abraham responds in such a generous way. He has just had a vision of Yĕhōvāh. He was looking down when he had the vision. Then he looks up and sees three men. He also has a vision of God in Genesis 15:1 NKJV, "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision."

When Abraham looks up and sees the three men we find out that these are not just angels,

but one of them is Yěhōváh. We understand this as a preincarnate appearance of the Messiah Yeshua. He washes their feet not just as a courtesy, but Arabs worship the dust of their feet. So perhaps he was making sure that no idols entered his house.

One of the men says that Sarah will have a child at this time the next year and Sarah laughs. The man who is יהוה (Yě-hō-váh, the exclusive name for God)¹ asks Sarah why she laughed and says that there is nothing too hard for Yě-hō-váh. Note when some Jews read the name Yěhōváh, they say Hashem which means "the name." Instead of using God's name that is used over 6,200 times in the Old Testament portion, they dishonor God and call God, "It." They are practicing a false man-made religion.

Also, Abraham's generosity in hospitality is an example for us. Shaul tells us in Romans 12:12-13 NKJV, "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality." Saints are not dead people as some believe, but people who follow God and His commandments. We are to help the saints who are in need it says. We are to pursue hospitality. Also in Hebrews 13:1-2 NKJV it says, "Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." In Abraham's case, he gave hospitality to two angels and God. Teachings about Abraham are important Jewish teachings and were part of their lifestyle in Yeshua's time. All the early believers were Jewish and we need to understand the Bible in its Jewish context.

God appeared as a man to Abraham; He eats and talks with him. Some say God cannot come as a man, but that is not true. Jeremiah 23:5-6 NKJV, "'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'" The word "LORD" is Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey, the exclusive name for God, pronounced as Yěhōváh. This clearly says that God will come as a man and be God. God also came in the form of a man as Yeshua our Messiah some 2,000 years ago. We understand these appearances of Yeshua in the Old Testament portion to be pre-incarnate appearances of Yeshua.

Yeshua gave believers the Holy Spirit to help us. Because He is God, He gave us both the law and the Holy Spirit. John 14:15-17 NKJV, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit of truth." He rose from the dead and went into the heavens until some future time to return as King as it says in Jeremiah. 1 Corinthians 15:6 NKJV, "After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once." He will return. Do not be caught living in unbelief.

Abraham leaves with the two angels and God for some of the way as they set out for S'dom. יהוה (Yě-hō-váh) stays with Abraham and reveals what He is about to do there. Abraham then intercedes for S'dom and begins asking יהוה (Yě-hō-váh) if He will spare them for only 50 righteous people. Abraham asks several times each time reducing the number and asking if יהוה (Yě-hō-váh) will spare the people there. Then יהוה (Yě-hō-váh) leaves Abraham in

¹Pronunciation of God's true name as seen in 2,363 manuscripts. Once as Ye-ho-veh; never as Yahweh.

Genesis 18:33.

The two other men (angels) went to S'dom and Lot met them in town and invited them back to his house to eat and stay overnight. The men of the town surrounded the house wanting to abuse the angels. The angels pulled Lot back into the house and blinded the men outside the house. They then told Lot they were going to destroy S'dom for its evil.

Lot and his immediate family leave, urged on by the angels, but his daughters husbands refuse to leave. We warn people to do what is right, but they do not listen and it is very sad. We do not wish the lake of fire on anyone, but they bring it on themselves because they refuse to listen to God. Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. S'dom and 'Amora are destroyed with brimstone and Lot's wife is made a pillar of salt because she looked back. Perhaps she had regard for those sinful cities. Lot ends up having children from his daughters. Perhaps they thought the world had ended.

Two portions ago, the world was destroyed for its wickedness by a flood. In today's portion, S'dom and 'Amora are destroyed for their wickedness. In the New Testament portion, Kefa talks about God helping those who do what is right and the impending judgment for the wicked.

2 Peter 2:4-10 NKJV:

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) — then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed."

We may have to live among ungodly people, but we do not have to live like them; do not live like them. Sadly, they will end up in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 21:8). It says God will help us to live right. If God reminds you that something is wrong; do not do it. God wants us to succeed.

Abraham goes into the Negev and meets Avimelekh. Abraham tells Avimelekh that Sarah is his sister. Avimelekh takes Sarah as his wife, but is warned in a dream that Sarah is Abraham's wife. Avimelekh returns Sarah and also gives Abraham gifts to vindicate himself. In Avimelekh's dream God told him that Abraham is a prophet and that Abraham would pray for him. Abraham prays for him and he and his family are healed so that they can have children.

Yitz'chak was born when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah is 90. Yitz'chak means laughter and probably is connected with Sarah's laughter within herself. God in the appearance of a man tells Sarah she laughed. We may think our thoughts and actions are not known, but God knows all. We cannot hide from an all-knowing God. After Yitz'chak is weaned, Sarah asks Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. God tells Abraham to listen to Sarah. After Hagar was sent away, Hagar initially became despondent, but an angel encouraged her and she found water. When Ishmael grew up he found a wife from Egypt.

The Bible says that God's tests us to see if we are true believers. Abraham was a great man of faith and an example to us. Here are some of the tests that Abraham faced:

- He lived in an idolatrous land.
- God told him to go to Canaan.
- There was a famine after he got to Canaan.
- Sarah is taken twice.
- Lot is taken and Abraham fights to get him back.
- He is told that his descendants will go into captivity.
- He is circumcised at 100.
- Sarah is infertile until she is 90.
- He had to send Ishmael away.
- He went to sacrifice Isaac.

We also need to remain faithful in all the tests we face and do. Deuteronomy 8:2 NKJV says, "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." We will also encounter testing; stand strong and pass your times of testing.

Then, Abraham and Avimelekh make an agreement. Abraham also gives Avimelekh 7 lambs as a witness for the well Abraham dug at Be'er Sheva. After this, God tested Abraham and told Abraham to go to Mount Moriah and offer up his son. Tradition says that Mount Moriah is where the 1st and 2nd Temple were located and that is where the Dome of the Rock now stands. Some believe the Temples were located in a different place. The Jews certainly have it in their power to put a Temple where tradition tells us the Temples stood, but for some reason they do not. After they got to Mount Moriah, just before Abraham was to offer up his son an angel stopped him and God provided a ram to sacrifice.

The account is called the Akedah in Jewish tradition and is a picture of the Messiah Yeshua giving Himself for our sins. God did not have a man give himself, but Yeshua as God came as a man. God provided a sacrifice for our sins through Yeshua. Isaiah 53:6 NKJV says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." The Messiah, Christ means to be anointed, is the final sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 9:28 NKJV says, "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." This parashah ends with Abraham going back to Be'er Sheva and he also finds out his brother Nachor had children.

When Shaul says he is bound to go to Jerusalem, it comes from the binding of Isaac. He is thinking about how Isaac allowed himself to be bound and give himself. The rabbis teach he was a grown man and he did this willingly. Theology sometimes says that Shaul disobeyed God because people prophesied that he would be in for trouble when he got to Jerusalem. Like Isaac was bound, Shaul was bound to go to Jerusalem and God provided a way out for Shaul and even sent him to where he wanted to go (Romans 15:30-32), just like Isaac was spared! Remember, the biblical context is Jewish not some made-up theology.

The Haftarah for Vayera is 2 Kings 4:1-37. The Haftarah contains stories about Elisha. First, he multiplies oil for a woman and her two sons to provide for them and then he heals a woman who is barren. When the woman's son dies, Elisha goes to her home and raises the child from the dead. In this Haftarah, we see another example of God using a prophet to heal others.

In this portion, Abraham (who is a prophet) prays for Avimelekh and Avimelekh's household is healed of infertility. In the Haftarah, the prophet Elisha raises a boy from the dead. Yeshua was a prophet and a healer, and also our Messiah. Most think that a prophetic person only gives words from God, but we also see prophetic people healing others. As believers in the Messiah, God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit and the associated evidences include prophecy and healing.

In the New Testament portion, there are evidences or gifts associated with the Holy Spirit. Shaul gives a list of gifts (where he calls them evidences) of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12. Remember, lists in Jewish thought are often representative and are not all inclusive. Shaul also gives other lists in Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 (where he calls them gifts). Prophets are listed in Ephesians 4 and gifts of healing are in 1 Corinthians 12:9. It should be remembered that spiritual gifts are very important, but they are only part of what the Bible teaches us. We are to believe in the whole Bible.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 NKJV:

"Moreover, to each person is given the particular manifestation of the Spirit that will be for the common good. To one, through the Spirit, is given a word of wisdom; to another, a word of knowledge, in accordance with the same Spirit; to another, faith, by the same Spirit; and to another, gifts of healing, by the one Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the ability to judge between spirits; to another, the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues; and to yet another, the ability to interpret tongues. One and the same Spirit is at work in all these things, distributing to each person as he chooses."

Finally

The exclusive name for God, Yĕhōvâh, is used in this portion as God appears to Abram as a man. S'dom and Amora are destroyed for their sin. They are still there as a reminder that God hates sin and the harm it causes. For example, because people say it is okay to commit sexual sin, 31 million people have died from the HIV, Aids virus, which in part has been spread by homosexual men. It has been generally accepted

that they are the principal carriers of this mostly sexually transmitted disease. It is said that one of every four homosexual men have this deadly disease at present and their continued sin continues to spread the disease.

God does not like sin because of the harm it brings. So be careful how you view this terrible sin that has killed so many. Are you being complicit with the deaths of all those millions by your beliefs? He will judge those who accept sin the Bible says. Again, we need to be frequently reminded what Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." This should bother people, but in our godless and compromising society in the United States, people ignore these awful consequences for the sin they do and accept. We do not wish anything bad on anyone. They bring these consequences on themselves.

Abraham is a prophet and he prays for Avimelech and he is healed. Yitzchak is born and Abraham was going to sacrifice him, but an angel stopped him. The rabbis teach that Isaac was grown up and was willing to give himself. God providing a sacrifice is a prophetic picture of the Messiah Yeshua in the future, who willingly gave Himself for our sin. We see that God did miracles and healings in the Old Testament portion, He continues to do the same in our era. Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change."

Commandments and Implied Commandments in this Portion (We can understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible.)

Believers in the true God are to get visions, words, and information from Yēhōvāh. Genesis 18:1.

We are to be hospitable towards others. Genesis 18:3-5; Romans 12:12-13.

God can do what He wants; nothing is too hard for God. Genesis 18:11-14.

God knows our secret thoughts and God can choose to judge us on our thoughts. Genesis 18:12-13. Also, note Genesis 6:5 NKJV, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the **thoughts** of his heart was only evil continually."

God may intervene to destroy those who are evil. Genesis 18:20

It is advantageous to make agreements with good people. Genesis 20:6, 21:22-23, 32

We must be willing to be patient in order to understand what God is telling us. It is possible that God knew that Abraham would misunderstand Him (or take God literally) and so produce this picture of the Messiah Yeshua giving Himself for us. God did not require a human sacrifice. Yeshua as God died and rose from the dead and came to deliver us from the devil and sin. Genesis 22:12-15; 1 John 3:8.