

## Genesis 18 Personal Interview

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### Overview

This chapter is a hinge between 17 (the promise of Isaac) and 19 (the destruction of the cities of the plain). Its own cohesiveness comes from the focus on the three visitors who come to Abraham's camp.

The chapter has three scenes, each introduced by a margin describing Abraham, the men, their situation, and a reference to seeing.

1-15	16-21	22-33
and [Abraham] sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him:	16 ¶ And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.	22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

### 1a, Setting

**The plains [oaks] of Mamre.**—Mamre is an Amorite chieftain with whom Abraham had an alliance (14:13). Both the man and his grove are first mentioned in 13:18, where Abraham camped after Lot chose the best part of the land. The trees would provide shade in the heat of the day and their dead branches would serve for fuel. “Plains” is following the Vulgate; LXX has “oaks.”

**The Lord appeared.**—Note the record of God's appearances to Abraham:

- His first interaction is verbal, not visual. He speaks to Abraham in 12:1 to call him out of his father's land, then again in 13:14 to detail the promise of the land, then in a vision in 15:1ff to make the covenant, in 21:12 to instruct concerning Hagar and Ishmael, then in 22:1 to offer Isaac and in 22:11 confirming the covenant.
- He appears for the first time in 12:7 (promising the land), then again in 17:1 and here.

Note concerning these interactions:

- They are *multiple*. Some believers focus all their attention on the point of their salvation, but God meets with us repeatedly during our pilgrimage, according to the needs of the moment.
- They are *varied*. Sometimes he speaks, sometimes he appears, sometimes he sends a vision. He does not always speak in the same way, but adapts his revelation to the needs of the moment.
- They are *at God's initiative*. Sometimes we may need to seek God's face, but he is not a God who hides himself. He wants to meet with his people and reveal himself to them, whether to pour out unmerited blessing (as here with Abraham), or to rebuke them for their sin (as he sought out Adam in the garden).

## **1b-15, First Scene: At the Tent Door (vv. 1, 2, 10)**

**in the tent door.**—This expression is repeated three times in this chapter (vv. 1, 2, 10). The expression focuses attention on people in their domestic setting; we would say “at home.” Compare Num 11:10, where the widespread discontent over the diet of manna takes the form of weeping “every man in the door of his tent.” Two points to take from this:

1. The Lord graciously comes to Abraham where he is. This lesson emphasizes that which we derived from the frequency and diversity of the Lord’s revelation to Abraham. It is a token of respect to go to the home of another rather than requiring them to come to your home. Other religions insist that people must go to a sacred spot in order to encounter God. But here at the very foundation of God’s covenant dealings with his people, he comes to them. The climax of this condescension is the incarnation.
2. But one might question, “What about the temple and the tabernacle? Weren’t they sacred places to which the people had to go?” Answer: their first function was not to take people out of their way to see God, but to indicate that God had come down to dwell among his people. Exod 25:8, “let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” In support of this, it is important to recognize that the expression “at the tent door,” with its connotations of domesticity, occurs frequently in Exod, Lev, and Num, where our version often translates it “at the door of the tabernacle.” See, for example, Exodus 33:10, “And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle [lit. “tent”] door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door.” Moses pitches his tent (33:7); the Lord comes to visit him there, and the people in the neighborhood recognize it. At this point Moses cautiously pitches his tent “afar off from the camp” (v.7), but when the true tabernacle is constructed, it is in their very midst.

**he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him.**—It appears that he is taken by surprise. He did not see them approach; perhaps he was napping. Or perhaps they appeared supernaturally; we will learn soon that one is the Lord and the other two are angels. They do not force themselves on him, but stand respectfully, waiting to be recognized.

## **2-8, Abraham’s Hospitality**

### *Abraham’s Attitude*

The text presents an interesting perspective on Abraham’s relation with the Lord.

On the one hand, the Jewish scribes who preserved the vowels of the text want us to understand that Abraham recognizes one of the travelers (“thy sight”) as the deity with whom he has been dealing all along. The word translated “my Lord” is the same used in 15:2, where we rendered it, “Sovereign Lord.” We know from 1a that it is the Lord, and Abraham certainly knows by the end of the chapter, but the scribes insist that he knew from the beginning. The difference is very slight grammatically (only one vowel), but it makes a big difference in what it says about Abraham. He has learned to recognize the Lord. Unlike the two on the road to Emmaus, his eyes are not holden. (Heb 13:2 does not contradict this view, as Calvin assumes, but merely asserts that he and Lot do not recognize the other two as angels.)

Yet his response, while deeply respectful, is not cultic. In earlier years he would have constructed an altar. Here he offers hospitality, deeply respectful to be sure, but such as he would

have offered to a human. Here we see the relation presupposed in 17:1, “walk before me,” and perhaps in 5:22; 6:9; “walked with God.” Recall the Lord’s promenade in the garden. He condescends to have fellowship with us at our level.

### *Abraham’s Hospitality*

Abraham’s conduct here shows many elements that are repeated in other hospitality scenes in the OT. The closest is Lot’s greeting of the angels in the next chapter, but one may also compare

- The old prophet and the young prophet near Bethel, 1 Kings 13:11-22
- Laban and Eliezer in Haran, Gen 24:29-33
- The old farmer and the Levite in Gibeah, Judg 19

This hospitality is urged on us in the NT. Elders are to be “given to hospitality” (1 Tim. 3:2), as are all believers (Rom 12:13), and the example of Abraham and Lot in these chapters is explicitly presented for our emulation in Heb 13:2. So we should take this episode as an example.

If we compare these hospitality stories, we can extract several common features of OT hospitality that merit our emulation.

**Greeting, 2b.**—The host proactively greets the guests. Here Abraham runs to them. It is the host’s obligation to see the traveler’s need and respond to it. Gen 24:29, Laban ran out to meet Abraham’s servant. Hospitality is not just providing room and board if you drop by, but a proactive concern for the needs and well-being of the traveler.

**Invitation, 3-5.**—He urges them to delay their journey and enjoy his hospitality. Two aspects of his greeting are worth noting.

- He emphasizes how little effort it will be for him: “a little water,” “a morsel of bread.” In the event, he produces quite a banquet for them. But he does not want them to think that they are burdening him. *Lesson:* Don’t make it look like a burden, or make them feel indebted.
- He sees their visit as divinely ordained, v.5, “for therefore have you passed by your servant.” (Note: the second *l* is governed by *‘abartem*, not *‘al ken*, contrary to Wenham’s rendering. In all other constructions of the form *Al ken* + verb + *al*, the second *al* goes with the verb, and is not a resumption of the first, and *abar al* is the standard idiom for “pass by.”) “This route is propitious for you, because I am here to take care of you.” You came this way so that I could take care of you. *Lesson:* We should receive guests as brought to us by God, and recognize our ministry to them as serving him.

**The meal, 6-8.**—Sometimes the guest stays overnight, sometimes (as here) they do not. But the invariable event in ancient hospitality is the meal. The table is the heart of family and friendship in the Bible. We must seek to preserve it in our families. Every family member should make it a priority to be home for dinner, and we should plan our meals to avoid disruption (e.g., don’t eat around the TV!).

Notice the energy that Abraham puts into preparing the meal. He is a blur of activity as he arranges for the bread, the meat, and the drink. He spares no expense: a calf is far more than three men need to eat. A lamb would have been plenty, but if (as the text suggests) he recognizes one of them as the Lord, we can see here a sign of his respect.

### **9-15, The Lord's Message**

Often, hospitality in the Bible is a prelude to a message between the host and the guest. So here, the visitor has a message. Lesson: Hospitality is not just a social engagement. It is a means of providing for peoples' needs (previous section), and an opportunity for spiritual ministry (this section).

Things to note:

**The message.**—Essentially the same as in 17:16,21

- Sarah shall bear a son
- “According to the time of life.” Usually understood as “about a year from now,” but this should be less than a year away, given some delay since 17:21. The expression only appears in contexts dealing with a promised birth; most straightforward to understand it as the human gestation period.

**Sarah's response.**—Laughter of unbelief.

- Like Abraham in 17:17, she finds the thing incredible.
- This suggests that Abraham has not shared with her what the Lord told him in ch. 17.

**The Lord's omniscience.**—He knows her doubt, even though the text is at pains to tell us that

- she is behind him, v.11
- her laughter is inward, v.12

He uses her doubt to remind her of his omnipotence: “Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” (v.14) “Hard” is an understatement. The word might better be translated, “marvelous, wonderful.” Its usage makes two important points.

1. There is a limit to human knowledge, understanding, and ability. The word is often used to refer to what people are unable to do, e.g., matters of judgment (Deut 17:8) or science (Prov 30:18).
2. God faces no such limit: here, Jer 32:17, 27. In fact, his name is “Wonderful,” Isa 9:6; Judg 13:18 (translated “secret”).

Thus this term captures the most important point of all Scripture, that we are limited creatures and God is the unlimited creator. Sometimes, to make this point clear to us (as here with Abraham and in Jer 32 with Jeremiah), he

- places us in situations that are impossible from our perspective,
- asks, “Is anything too hard for me?”
- and then displays his glory by resolving them.

*Perhaps we can now reconstruct the purpose of this visit in relation to ch. 17. In ch. 17, the Lord told Abraham that he and Sarah were to have a son, but the more immediate command of circumcision necessarily postponed their union, not to mention Abraham's lack of vigor (“my husband being old”). Now the Lord returns to remind them of the earlier promise and their obligations under it, and with his specific reference to “the time of life” urges them to get going.*

## 16-21, Second Scene: On the Road to Sodom

Like the other two scenes in the chapter, this scene is introduced (16) by a reference to the men, a looking, and Abraham's action.

The point of this scene is the Lord's revelation to Abraham of his purpose concerning Sodom and Gomorrah in 20-21. Verses 16-19 prepare for this by describing what Abraham did and what the Lord did. Strictly speaking, we should read 16b and 17-19 as circumstantial clauses: "The men rose up and looked toward Sodom, while Abraham did xxx and while the Lord did yyy."

### 16-19, Preparation

**Abraham's action** (16b) was to accompany his guests on their way. This gesture shows how pleased he was to host them, how much he valued their visit, and how he regretted their departure. Compare the actions of believers toward Paul at Ephesus (Acts 20:38) and Tyre (Acts 21:4-5). Since he recognizes their leader as the Lord, we may see here a desire to linger in the Lord's presence, and an openness to divine instruction.

**The Lord's action** (17-19) is a soliloquy, perhaps best understood as deliberation with his companions and not yet audible to Abraham. The question at hand is whether Abraham should be admitted to the divine counsels, which is the privilege of the prophet. Cf. Amos 3:7; Jer 23:16-22; and the vision of the heavenly court accessible to Micaiah in 1 Kings 22. In explaining why Abraham should be granted access to this knowledge, the Lord begins with a general statement and then makes it more particular. *This explanation takes account of the asymmetric construction of 18 with respect to 19 (18 a disjunctive clause to 17, 19 subordinated with ki) better than does Calvin's explanation of two motives, which would be more natural if they were parallel to one another grammatically.*

- General (18): he will have many offspring and be a means of blessing to the world. God has made him a crucial link to the future of the world, so it will be useful for him to understand God's councils. The mechanism for this is not clear in this verse, but becomes clear in the next.
- Specific (19): A knowledge of God's coming judgment will enable him to instruct his offspring properly, so that they may walk in ways that are pleasing to God. The basic mechanism is thus instruction from parent to child down through successive generations.

Verse 19 is extremely rich for understanding God's dealings with his people. Central to its understanding is the observation that the particle "that" which occurs twice is unambiguously a particle of purpose, "in order that." The three clauses give us the sequence of God's purposes:

- I know him *in order that*
- he will raise his family well, *in order that*
- the Lord may fulfill his promises.

*Order of lema'an clauses: the second governs infinitive, the first finite verb. Hollenbach's constraint shows that the second modifies the first, not the base clause "I know him."*

Consider each of these in turn.

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1. “I know him,” or even, “I have known him.” In English, we might think that this is knowledge of facts, “I know that he will raise his family well.” But the unambiguous nature of “that” shows that this knowledge is active, not passive. “I have known him in order that something will happen.” This is an example of God’s elective knowledge of people, choosing them for his purposes.
  - a. Gen 4:1, “Adam knew Eve his wife,” indicating a personal relationship, not a cognitive one.
  - b. Amos 3:2, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” God is not confessing to ignorance of the others, but rather indicating that he has brought Israel into a special relation with himself.
  - c. Relate to Rom 8:29.
2. The purpose of the intimate relationship that God establishes with Abraham is the ordering of his family. This ought to encourage us concerning the first priority of the family. God does not elect Abraham in order to be a great preacher, or in order to subdue uncivilized nations, or in order to generate a prosperous society, but in order to rule his family well. This is spelled out in two steps:
  - a. “he will command his children and his household after him.” In an age that emphasizes giving children their own way and not constraining them, note the simple, straightforward expectation that the father should command his children and his household.
    - i. Children: godly parents ought not to shy away from commanding their children.
    - ii. “Household” goes beyond his biological offspring to include his wife, other relatives who might be living with him (as Lot did for a time), and also hired servants. We are responsible for those within our households. We cannot compel them to believe, but we can expect them to conform to godly standards as long as they enjoy our hospitality.
    - iii. “After him” suggests that the substance of his command is that they will follow his example. He does not enjoin on them anything that he is not willing to do himself. The command is to obey the Lord by following Abraham’s example. This simple phrase thus guards against arbitrary or harsh commands.
  - b. “they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment”: This is presented as the natural outcome of his example and commands. The best definition of “doing justice and judgment” is Ezekiel 18:5-9. It indicates complete conformity to the law of God, and in fact is often associated (as here) with the verb “keep” or “guard.” Ezek 18 shows that the term is applicable to any individual, but most uses of the phrase in the OT refer to the king or judge, who is responsible not only for his own conduct but also for applying God’s law accurately with regard to others. This focus on God’s law is one mechanism by which Abraham’s descendants will be a blessing to others (v.18); the other is the coming of the Messiah.

*Interesting question: access to God’s counsels is the privilege of the prophet (Amos 3:7). Yet the basis on which God reveals his will to Abraham is not that he is a prophet, but that he is God’s*

*elect. Compare also Amos 7:14-15, where he protests his “non-professional” status, and Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6; 5:10, where the offices of king and priest are in principle the possession of all of God’s people. Is there a comparable distribution of the role of the prophet?*

3. In turn, the obedience of his children forms the basis on which God will perform the promises that he has made to Abraham. How does this reconcile with Rom 4:2-4 and Gal 3:18?

Answer: God accomplishes his sovereign will through created causes.

- a. The promise is gratuitous: Abraham did nothing to deserve it.
- b. But it is also efficacious, as the first “that” shows. God’s free election of Abraham leads to his obedient regulation of his family, and that in turn makes God’s fulfillment of the promises consistent with his holiness. Compare NT verses:
  - i. Heb 12:13, without holiness no man shall see the Lord
  - ii. Eph 2:10, we are created unto good works, which God has foreordained that we should walk in them. Our practical righteousness is as much as part of God’s sovereign plan and decree as is our eternal salvation.

Summary: God has sovereignly chosen Abraham not only to receive blessing, but to live as a godly man, instructing his children and household in righteousness. In support of this instruction, he must understand that God’s law carries sanctions, and those who spurn it will suffer. Thus God should share with him the saga that is unfolding around the wicked cities of the plain.

### **20-21, The Lord (to Abraham)**

The Lord’s revelation to Abraham (20-21) is marked with a new introduction, “and the Lord said.” Abraham’s response in 23ff shows that he hears these words.

Behold the forbearance of God. Rom 2:4; 9:22; 2 Pet 3:9.

v.21, He is aware of the sin of the cities of the plain and its consequences.

- “their *sin* is very grievous”
- “their *cry* [of anguish] is great.” “cry” is the lament of one who is oppressed; cf. Pr 21:13; Neh 9:9.

That is, he sees both their violation of his law and the consequences it has on the oppressed. As judge of all the earth (v.25), he cares for the oppressed, the fatherless, the stranger, the widow.

v.22, nevertheless, he does not rush to judgment, but makes diligent, deliberate inquiry to determine the state of affairs and whether they are truly deserving of his full judgment.

- “I will go down,” as in 11:5,7, at Babel. He does not need to go down for his sake; he already knows their state. But he proceeds with utmost deliberation for their sakes, and ours, so that we may know that his judgment is not rash or precipitous, but fully merited.
- “the cry of it” probably combines the two ideas of v.20, “cry” and “sin.” The antecedent of “it” is “sin”: “the cry resulting from their sin.”
- “done altogether” = “wrought completion.” The issue is whether their iniquity is full. Compare 15:16, “the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full.” (Later use of the phrase in

the prophets is to describe the Lord's complete destruction. Is the sense here that they have gone so far in their sin as to bring the Lord's judgment on themselves?)

- "If not, I will know." Here is his longsuffering and forbearance. He does not rush to judgment, but seeks every possible reason to restrain his wrath. This comment is almost inviting Abraham's following intercession, as though the Lord wants an excuse to withhold judgment.

On the basis of this revelation, Abraham knows two things about God:

1. People cannot sin with impunity. God knows of their sin, and it matters to him. Thus judgment must one day fall.
2. Yet God is longsuffering, and there is room for intercession.

These two facts motivate the next paragraph in the story.

## **22-33, Third Scene: Abraham Bargains with the Lord**

### **22, Setting**

The party of three visitors divides. The two who are later called "angels" (19:1) continue on their way to Sodom, but the Lord remains to talk with Abraham.

This is one of the 18 "emendations of the scribes," places where the Rabbis record that the scribes have altered the text for the sake of piety. According to them, the text originally read, "The Lord stood yet before Abraham." This would be a remarkable state of affairs: the Lord declares his intent to be fair and patient in his deliberation, and then by waiting patiently, virtually forces Abraham to engage him on the subject. Even if the MT is correct (which is suggested by 19:27), it is still the case that the Lord did not hasten away with the two angels, but remained so that Abraham could draw near to him and intercede.

Compare 17:1, where God commanded Abraham to "walk before me." Living consciously in the Lord's presence requires not only godly obedience, but also a willingness to intercede with him for others.

### **23-32, The Haggle**

We need to consider first what is said, and then the lessons that we learn from it.

#### *Structure*

Six times Abraham approaches the Lord. The first request, for leniency in the case of 50 righteous men, sets forth the logic of his case. The other five, as he reduces the count to ten, show his deference in the midst of intercession. We have also to notice the Lord's response, which is complete in the first round and subverted in the subsequent rounds.

**Abraham's Logic.**—He appeals to "the judge of all the earth." God has just enjoined him to instruct his children in "justice and judgment." In doing so, he must follow the example of the divine judge. The essence of justice and judgment is distinguishing right and wrong. Surely God must make such a distinction.

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“Spare” is too weak. The verb is *ns'*, which in contexts like this regularly means “forgive.” Abraham envisions that the righteousness of a few might be accepted in the place of the sin of the many.

**Abraham’s deference.**—Though he is interceding with the Lord, he is completely respectful. All of his subsequent speeches except for the third include a mark of deference.

- He regularly uses the term *adonai*, “sovereign Lord,” 27, 30, 31, 32, the same title he used when challenging the Lord’s promises in 15:2,8. This passage reinforces the lesson we learned in the previous one: our relation with the Lord is neither passive nor disrespectful. He wants us to engage him, but at the same time he expects our reverence.
- In 27 and 31, he acknowledges his intrinsic unworthiness to speak to the Lord. 27 is more full, and he characterizes himself there as “dust and ashes.” “Dust” is from 2:7; he recalls what has been passed on to him about his origin. “Ashes” is a pun, replacing the guttural in “dust” *afar* with the glottal stop aleph.
- In 30 and 32, he prays that the Lord not be angry with him. He recognizes that God is the final judge, and all must meet his approval.

**The Lord’s Response.**—Three elements, all in v.26, and subsetting in subsequent frames:

- “If I find.” The matter still rests on his sovereign decision.
- The number of people specified
- “for their sake.”

### Lessons

We can learn three things from this episode, by considering the three characters involved.

1. *Abraham*: Intercession is a godly ministry. This chapter is the first example that we find in the Bible, of prayer by one person seeking to avert the judgment to which another may be liable. Such a ministry manifests deep compassion on the part of one toward the other. Abraham may have Lot in mind, but his concern goes beyond Lot to any righteous who may be in Sodom, and he charitably assumes there will be many. He does not delight in destruction of those who are different from himself. Two levels of application here:
  - a. Encouragement that our Lord exercises such a ministry on our behalf: Rom 8:27, 34; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1; cf. John 17.
  - b. Our privilege of engaging in such a ministry on behalf of others.

Ref	Intercessor	Cause of Judgment	Intercessor’s Argument
Gen 18	Abraham	Violence of Sodom and Gomorrah	God’s righteousness; presence of righteous with the wicked
Exod 32-34	Moses	The children of Israel made a golden calf; the Lord threatened to destroy them.	God’s reputation before the heathen
1 Sam 12:23	Samuel	Israel asks for a king	God’s reputation, v.22
Amos 7:1-9	Amos	General sins rebuked throughout the book	Israel’s small size and weakness
Jer 14:7-9, 13; 15:1	Jeremiah	“our backslidings are many”	God’s name

2. *God*: Note how the motive in invariably focuses on God’s attributes:

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- a. His righteousness in protecting the righteous
- b. His mercy and pity on the weak and helpless (Amos)
- c. His glory (protecting his own reputation.

When he acts, he is his own motive. He acts consistently with his character.

3. *The People of Sodom*: Not even ten could be found who were righteous. The corruption of the city had touched all except Lot. In the event, even his wife and daughters are seen to be corrupted. Cf. Ezek 16:49,50.

### 33, Clearing the Stage

This verse should be read together with 19:1 to show the disposition of the four individuals with whom the chapter begins:

- The Lord leaves;
- Abraham returns to his camp;
- The two angels (definite, not “two angels” as AV) arrive at Sodom.

## Notes

### Comparison of Hospitality between Abraham and Lot

Abraham, Gen 18	Lot, Gen 19
<i>The Guests Appear</i>	
1 ¶ And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre:	1 ¶ And there came two angels to Sodom at even;
and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;	and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom:
2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him:	
<i>Proactive Greeting</i>	
and when he saw <i>them</i> , he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,	and Lot seeing <i>them</i> rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;
<i>“Stay a while and then go on”</i>	
3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:	2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant’s house, and tarry all night,
4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet,	and wash your feet,
and rest yourselves under the tree: 5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts;	
after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant.	and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways.
<i>Ritual Refusal</i>	
	And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.
And they said, So do, as thou hast said.	3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house;
<i>The Meal</i>	
6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead <i>it</i> , and make cakes upon the hearth. 7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and	and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread,

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gave <i>it</i> unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it. 8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set <i>it</i> before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.	
	and they did eat.

### **Doing Justice and Judgment**

	Justice, then Judgment	Judgment, then Justice
King, Judge, Ruler	Deut 33:21 (Gad); Psa 103:6 (Lord)	2 Sam 8:15; 1 Chr 18:14 (David); 1 Kings 10:9; 2 Chr 9:8 (Solomon); Jer 22:3, 15 (Zedekiah?); Psa 99:4 (generic); Jer 9:24 (Lord, with <i>xesed</i> ); Jer 23:5; 33:15 (Messiah; cf. Isa 9:3); Ezek 45:9 (princes of Israel)
Ordinary person	Gen 18:19 (Abraham's descendants); Prov 21:3 (> sacrifice)	Ezek 18:5, 19, 21, 27; 33:14, 16, 19

Keep judgment, do justice: Psa 106:3; Isa 56:1

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- Gen 18:19, keep way of the Lord
- Ezek 18:19, 21, keep God's statutes

### **Structure of the Haggie, 23-32**

23 ¶ And Abraham drew near, and said,	27 And Abraham answered and said,	29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said	30 And he said <i>unto him</i> ,	31 And he said,	32 And he said,
	Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which <i>am but</i> dust and ashes:		Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak:	Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord:	Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once:
Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?					
24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city:	28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous:	Peradventure there shall be forty found there.	Peradventure there shall thirty be found there.	Peradventure there shall be twenty found there.	Peradventure ten shall be found there.
wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that <i>are</i> therein? 25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?	wilt thou destroy all the city for <i>lack of five</i> ?				
26 And the LORD said,	And he said,	And he said,	And he said,	And he said,	And he said,
If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city,	If I find there forty and five,				

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then I will spare all the place	I will not destroy <i>it</i> .	I will not do <i>it</i>	I will not do <i>it,</i>	I will not destroy <i>it</i>	I will not destroy <i>it</i>
<b>for their sakes.</b>		<b>for forty's sake.</b>	<b>if I find</b> thirty there.	<b>for twenty's sake.</b>	<b>for ten's sake.</b>