



Message 11-4-17
VaYera-And He Appeared
Genesis 18:1-22:24
2 Kings 4:1-37
Hebrews 13:2-14

Introduction

In today's Torah portion, Abraham receives three visitors – complete strangers – and drops everything he is doing to welcome them into his home. Hospitality is a central value to Abraham as he rushes about, offering water for his guest's dusty feet, and choosing a calf from his herd for their dinner. Sarah kneads dough for cakes. How differently we respond to the hungry today. We need a sense of community and belonging, true hospitality. Abraham set the example. He welcomed three strangers into his home and received the blessings of serving his Messiah, Yeshua.

Genesis 18:1-5

1 ADONAI appeared to Avraham by the oaks of Mamre as he sat at the entrance to the tent during the heat of the day. **2** He raised his eyes and looked, and there in front of him stood three men. On seeing them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, prostrated himself on the ground, **3** and said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, please don't leave your servant. **4** Please let me send for some water, so that you can wash your feet; then rest under the tree, **5** and I will bring a piece of bread. Now that you have come to your servant, refresh yourselves before going on." "Very well," they replied, "do what you have said." (CJB)

Notice that Abraham prostrated himself on the ground before the men before him, yet, maybe it was not for all three men but for the one he addressed as Lord? Abraham wanted to have water to wash their feet. This immediately brings to mind the story of the woman who washed Yeshua with her tears and anointed His feet with oil.

Luke 7:44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. **45** You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. **46** You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. **47** Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven-- for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." **48** And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." (ESV)

This is not the first instance of washing one's feet in Scripture being tied to the Messiah, even back in the story of Abraham and the three visitors. But it is so much more important than that because we see bread crumbs being laid down as clues leading us to the Messiah, the Son of God.

John 13:5 Then he poured some water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the *talmidim* and wipe them off with the towel wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Shim'on Kefa, who said to him, "Lord! You are washing my feet?" ⁷ Yeshua answered him, "You don't understand yet what I am doing, but in time you will understand." (CJB)

Simon Peter was a very impulsive individual, and perhaps that is what endeared him to Yeshua. On the one hand, Peter began to realize who Yeshua truly was, and on the other hand, he was not fully grounded in his belief that Yeshua was and is the Messiah. When Yeshua is taken, tried and crucified, Peter was among the disciples who, all but John, believed He was dead, and they had spent the last three plus years following Him wherever He went. They were in an intense training period without realizing it. They were being prepared for what was to come after Yeshua was gone. They would become the foundation for a faith that was the fulfillment of Judaism and not really Christianity. Christianity, or what became Christianity as the religion we know today, veered totally off course by throwing away its Jewish foundation. This was the faith Messiah had built on, seeded into His disciples, and who would go on to spread the truth to the world as they knew it. Others would take it even further, but along the way, those who followed the Apostles went their own way and took the faith built by God and man and turned it into something, those who understand its tenants, something apart from the original faith Yeshua planted the seeds. He wanted the people of Israel to return to the Torah, and many did, but many more did not. When it took on the mantle of Christianity, Judaism turned away from it because of the persecution that had come from this "loving" religion.

Abraham represented what was good about a faith that in his day had no name. Abraham was one of the few who believed in the one true God and the pagan gods flitting about all over the place. It would seem as soon as man fell and Satan had been thrown out of heaven, the worship of pagan gods started in earnest. We were created by a Living God who through His Son brought into being everything that exists. Abraham recognized the Son of God and bowed before Him in worship. He did not bow before the angels. He knew God, and now he knew his Son.

Judges 6:16 And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." ¹⁷ And he said to him, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me." ¹⁸ Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you." And he said, "I will stay till you return." ¹⁹ So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them. ²⁰ And the angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them." And he did so. ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the

unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. ²² Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now, I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." ²³ But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die." (ESV)

Don't you find it inspiring in the different ways God reaches out to man and responds to his requests? Gideon asked the Lord to show him that was indeed God who was speaking with him. Gideon went into his house, prepared a young goat, unleavened cakes, and a broth. He brought them to the angel of the Lord, was told to place them altogether on the rock, and pour the broth on them. The angel of the Lord reached out the tip of His staff and touched the offering. Fire sprang from the rock and consumed everything, and the angel vanished. Gideon knew he had been in the presence of the Lord, or should we say that part of the Godhead we know as Messiah Yeshua? He even said he had seen the angel of the Lord face to face, but the Lord told him he would not die. He had looked upon the face of the Son of God who had become a man like you and I and walked among mankind whenever He would choose. This was that part of God that was manifested to have a personal relationship with mankind and to redeem mankind from its destruction because of its sin.

But the story of Yeshua is even greater than what we see in His death. His death was only part of the solution. It was in His resurrection that God overcame sin and put it in its place destined to be snuffed out like a candle never to be lit again. Yet, even in His death and resurrection, we have only seen the first part of His plan; the plan embodied in the Spring Festivals. The fulfillment of the Spring Festivals is still to come, and in them will come the return of the Messiah and the Day of Judgment. But before that we will have the Great Tribulation where the anti-messiah will be revealed along with the false prophet. Mankind will be blinded by this servant of Satan who will lead the world into darkness, and the only light in that darkness will come from those who follow the true Messiah, the Son of the one true God! In that darkness, the power of Satan will be released upon the world as he works to draw away as many as he can from God and His Son, Yeshua.

He will bring peace to the Middle East, between Israel and all its enemies. It will be a false peace that even the Jewish people will buy into, but there will be those whose blindness will be lifted so they see Satan for who he is and see Yeshua for who He is. They will finally know the God of Israel the way it was always meant to be.

2 Kings 4:32-37

32 When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. ³³ So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴ Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. ³⁵ Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. ³⁶ Then he summoned Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So, he called her. And when she came to him, he said, "Pick up your son." ³⁷ She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out. (ESV)

Are they His manifest power as the Creator of all? Does He have the power over everything that exists and can do with it as He chooses? In other words, He can manipulate this material world because He created it. He can heal because He created mankind. He can move the oceans to do His will and the winds that blow in the sky. They are all at His fingertips. Is it possible that everything that is happening now is God beginning to move to show man His great displeasure with us? Are we like mankind in Noah's day worthy of destruction? Do we deserve redemption? Redemption is God's control over sin because He created it. He placed it on the table, man took a bite of it, and we are still paying for man's choice. We struggle with trying to change our nature. If we surrender ourselves to Yeshua, He will work in our lives to help direct us to walk the road He walked. Are our lives predestined. For me, I believe that we were all predestined to be redeemed, but He gave us the ability to choose between good and evil, and Adam and Chavah chose to disobey a direct command from God. As their children, we are still living out the path they laid for descendants. God allows Satan to set before us good and evil. We make the choice. If we choose the path of good, we have chosen the path predestined for us from the beginning. If we choose evil, not even Elisha will be able to resurrect us from the dead.

Hebrews 11:35 Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. (NRS)

Everyone will face a day when they will have to choose. When that day comes, it may already be too late for so many. Will you stand strong for your faith, or will you turn away from the only way to reach salvation? Yeshua has already walked the road we now walk. He showed us that we can overcome and walk in the light that was predestined for us so long ago, even before we were even created. We were just a twinkle in His eye, and yet He acted on that instinct and created us through His Son Yeshua, by Him and for Him. Using His Living Word, Messiah Yeshua, with His Ruach HaKodesh, brought everything there is into existence out of nothing. Like an artist coming to his canvas for the very first time, he sees nothing, yet he has an idea, a thought in his head. This world is His canvas, and He has brought it to life for His Son. We exist for Him and Him alone.

Hebrews 13:2-14

2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. ³ Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, *and* those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body. ⁴ Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage* bed *is to be* undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. ⁵ *Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," [Deu. 31:6, 31:8, Joshua 1:5] ⁶ so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?" [Psa. 118:6] ⁷ Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. ⁸ Yeshua the Messiah *is* the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹ Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods,

through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. ¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹² Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. ¹³ So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. ¹⁴ For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come. (NAU)

God has a plan for each one of us that we play on this stage, in this life. We have all failed and fall short of the glory of God. That is our limitation, and we must rise above that nature. In each one of us, we have a sin nature and a good nature. One gives us a heart of stone, the other gives us a heart of flesh. With our acceptance of the sacrifice of Yeshua, we reach in the right direction, and our hearts begin the journey from being hearts of stone to becoming hearts of flesh where He will be able to write His Torah, His everlasting covenant forever. There is no “New” Covenant. There has always been one covenant, though one was based on following the rules, but it has always had the inherent promise of becoming so much more.

1 Peter 4:14 If you are insulted for the name of Messiah, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. (ESV)

Do you choose to live for Messiah or turn away from Him? The day is fast approaching when you will have to make a choice. Many will shower you with curses, and you will be insulted because of Him. What will you do? Will you give in and turn away because of the short time you will be persecuted in this life? There is a life so much better waiting for you. Reach out and grab hold of it. Let Him write His covenant of Torah on your heart of flesh the way He had wanted to do it from the beginning.

Torah Man says, “Consider the postage stamp. Its usefulness lies in the ability to stick to one thing until completed.”

Blessings in Messiah Yeshua,

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