

Parashat Vayera

פרשת וירא

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Was God Himself Speaking to Avraham?

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 18:1-22:24

הפטרה: 2 Kings 4:1-37

הברית: Matthew 8-10

החדשה

Triennial cycle: Bereshit / Genesis 19:1-20:18

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This week's Parashah, Parashat Vayera (*Bereshit / Genesis 18:1-22:24*) we read in the opening verses וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה בְּאֵלֵי יְנִי מִמְרָא *"the Lord appeared to him (Avraham) by the oaks of Mamre,"* here we find the Lord God almighty visits Avraham along with two men which are believed to be angels from the Lord (18:1-3). Avraham learns that his wife Sarah is going to bear a son (18:9-15), the Lord speaks to Avraham about the destruction of Sodom and Gemorah and Avraham seeks mercy for these evil cities for the sake of the righteous (18:17-33).

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The Lord has mercy on Lot and Lot recognizes the mercy and grace of God וַיִּבֶן לוֹ מִצְדָּה עַבְדְּךָ חוֹן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וַתַּגְדֵּל חַסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי לְהַחְיִית אֶת-נַפְשִׁי וְאַנִּי כִּי ל' א אֹיְכַל לְהַמְלִיט

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מִצְדָּה עַבְדְּךָ חוֹן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וַתַּגְדֵּל חַסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי לְהַחְיִית אֶת-נַפְשִׁי וְאַנִּי כִּי ל' א אֹיְכַל לְהַמְלִיט
19:19 *'Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die; (NASB),* Lot's daughters commit sexual sin with their father (19:31-38), Avraham encounters Avimelech and Avimelech takes Sarah for his wife and God's subsequent curse and then the forgiveness of Avimelech and all his household (20:1-18), and God tests Avraham to sacrifice his only son Yitzchak (22:1-18). As we read the Hebrew text we have the understanding that the Lord has great plans for Avraham saying *"Shall I hide from Avraham what I am about to do"* : 18:18 *"since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?"* After Avraham successfully passes being tested,

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God says : 22:18 *'In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.'*

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The significance of the opening passages to Parashat Vayera in *Bereshit / Genesis 18:1-3* and the rest of the Parashah centers around the question on who is the person that Avraham is speaking to, is He the Lord God Almighty? The Hebrew text says "And Adonai (YHWH) appeared to him." The verb וַיֵּרָא appears 167 times in the Tanach and 88 times in the Torah, each occurrence of the word requires context, in some cases it refers to the Lord saw (see *Bereshit 1*) and in others like in our text this week as "appeared" or "made known." This week God made Himself known to Avraham, and Avraham recognized that the Lord was

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speaking to him. As we study these scriptures this week, can you hear the Lord God Almighty speaking to you too?

פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק יח פסוק א-ה

א וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בָּאֵל גִּי מִמְרָא וְהוּא י' נִשְׁבַּ פְּתַח-הָא הֵל כַּח מֵ הַיּוֹם: ב וַיֵּשְׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא
וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשׁ אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיִּרְץ לִקְרָאתָם מִפְּתַח הָא הֵל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה: ג וַיֹּאמֶר
אֵד נִי אִם-נָא מְצֵאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֵל-נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עֲבֹדְךָ: ד וַיִּקַּח-נָא מֵעֵט-מִים וַרְחִצּוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם
וְהִשְׁעֲנוּ תַּחַת הַעֵצִים: ה וַאֲקָהָה פֶת-לְחֶם וְסִעְדּוּ לְבַבְכֶם אַחַר תַּעֲבֹר רֹו כִי-עַל-כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל-עֲבֹדְכֶם
וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:

Examining the Greek translation of the Torah, the Septuagint (LXX), *Bereshit / Genesis 18:1* is translated as “*Appeared and to him God*” (ὤφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ θεός). Here God is making himself known to Avraham. As we studied in Parashat Bereshit the Memra (מִימְרָא, Word) of God has the authority and power of God according to the Aramaic translation and the Angel of the Lord is used in the Hebrew text. The context of the Memra, and the Angel of the Lord indicate that the Memra (מִימְרָא, Word) and the Angel are a manifestation of God. God made himself known in the Memra (מִימְרָא, Word), in the Angel of the Lord, and by the Angel in the burning bush in *Shemot / Exodus 3:2* (וַיֵּרָא מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֵלָיו) (בְּלִבַּת-אֵשׁ מְתוֹךְ הַסֵּנֶה וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה הַסֵּנֶה בַּיַּעַר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסֵּנֶה אֵינְנוּ אֹכֵל), etc. In each of these ways, the Lord God Almighty appeared in a way that we could understand. In a similar manner, the Lord appears to Avraham in human form. The importance on understanding the various ways God has revealed Himself to mankind throughout history is related to Yeshua the Messiah and scripture in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) in *John 1:1-14* that the Word of God becoming flesh and dwelling among men. It is possible that the Word of God appeared to mankind in human form in a similar manner as the Lord and the angels appeared to Avraham here in *Bereshit / Genesis 18*. The question remains though, was the One whom Avraham spoke to the Lord God Almighty?

Context is the most important point in studying these verses while asking the question on whether one of the three men is God speaking to Avraham or simply a man or an angel. “*Mr. Spurrell’s Notes on the Text of Genesis*” (1896, Oxford) (search *google.com* books) has a discussion on how Avraham addresses the spokesperson of the three men that appeared to him and on the word “Adonai” (אֲדֹנָי). Mr. Spurrell examines the Nikkud vowel marks as an indicator on who Avraham is speaking too.

פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק יח פסוק ג

ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֵד נִי אִם-נָא מְצֵאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֵל-נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עֲבֹדְךָ:

The Nikkud vowels were created by the Masorets of Tiberias and is a system of diacritical signs used for the pronunciation of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Spurrell concludes that when the Masoretic text points the word Adonai (אֲדֹנָי) with the qametz instead of the patach it signifies that the Masorets believed Avraham was addressing the Lord God Almighty. Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon (BDB) has an interesting comment on the word Adonai. According to the BDB, variations of the word Adon (אֲדוֹן) as Adonei, Adoni, and two variations of Adonai using the

Bereshit / Genesis 18:1-5

18:1 Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. 18:2 When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth, 18:3 and said, ‘My lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass your servant by. 18:4 ‘Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; 18:5 and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant.’ And they said, ‘So do, as you have said.’ (NASB)

gametz and the patach marks are used to distinguish the divine references from human references. Looking at *Bereshit / Genesis 18:3*, the Masoretic text points the word “Adonai” with the gametz and not the patach thus based on this critic of the Hebrew text Avraham is addressing the Lord God Almighty. Comparing a printed copy of the LXX with the Hebrew text, we see Kurie (Κύριε) from the word “Κύριος” (kurios) meaning “Lord” is capitalized which indicates to me the translators of the LXX were under the opinion that this name Adonai was considered *שׁדק* “holy,” the capital letter signifies that they saw this as referring to the Name of God similar to *Bereshit / Genesis 18:1* reference to Theos (Θεός), the letter theta is capitalized and enlarged.

ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ 18:1-3

100 *ᾧφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Θεὸς* πρὸς τῆ δρυὶ τῆ Μαμβρη καθημένου αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς αὐτοῦ μεσημβρίας, ἀναβλέψας δὲ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ εἶδεν καὶ ἰδοὺ τρεῖς ἄνδρες εἰστήκεισαν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰδὼν προσέδραμεν εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ εἶπεν **Κύριε** εἰ ἄρα εὔρον χάριν ἐναντίον σου μὴ παρέλθης τὸν παῖδά σου

Bereshit / Genesis 18:1-3
 18:1 Appeared and to him God before the oak in Mamre, at his sitting near the door of his tent at the midday. 18:2 And lifting up his eyes he saw; and behold three men had set upon him. And seeing, he ran up to meet with them from the door of his tent. And he did obeisance upon the ground. 18:3 And he said, O Lord, if surely I found favor before you, you should not go by your servant. (Literal Translation)

110 It is interesting to note that the spelling of Adonai with the gametz occurs 134 times in the Tanach without the divine name YHVH or Elohim. A complete list of verses can be found in the “*Hebrew Bible: BFBS Major Edition (volumes 3 and 4a)*” by Dr Christian D. Ginsburg. If you have a copy of Ginsburg’s Masoretic text, look at the following verses taken from the Torah, *Bereshit / Genesis 18:27, 18:31, 19:18, 20:4, Shemot / Exodus 4:10, 4:13, 15:17, 34:9, Bamidbar / Numbers 14:17*. These select verses contain the occurrences of Adonai without the accompanying divine names. While examining these verses it is interesting to observe in the Marginal Masorah, Ginsburg notes in some copies of the Torah, the word “Adonai” is found to be written as the YHVH (*Bereshit 15:17, 20:4, and Bamidbar 14:17*).

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פרשת לך לך ספר בראשית פלק יה פסוק יז

v. 13 ב"ב גַּאֲלַת רַפִּי. v. 16 ס"א עליהם | פסקו. v. 16 בן בהללי, ירושלמי וְרַעְיָה חסר.
 v. 16 בהללי קָנִיתָ. v. 17 נ"א ב"ב וְהַטַּעְמוּ בַּגְּעִיָּא. v. 17 ס"א יְהוָה וְכֵן רַב, חַדְתָּה
 דָּוָן וְחַ"שׁ. v. 19 כֵּן יִרְיָחוּ אֶת־בְּרִישׁ שׁוּרָה שְׁנִיָּה. v. 20 ס"א וְהַטַּעְמוּ וְנִמְסַר עֲלֶיהָ בְּמוֹגָה
 וְהַטַּעְמוּ. v. 25 ו רבתי.

פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק כ פסוק ד

v. 28 ס"א ועל־פְּנֵי כָל־אַרְצֵי וְכֵן חַ"שׁ, וְחַ"א כ"ו, וְעַל פְּנֵי הַנֶּבֶר בַּת־עַ. v. 30 כֵּן בַּהֲלָלִי, יְרוּשָׁלַּמִּי מִצַּעֲרַר חָסֵר. v. 31 בַּהֲלָלִי לָבֵא חָסֵר. v. 33 סְבִיר הָהוּא וְכֵן ת"י. v. 33 נְקוּד עַל ו'. v. 4 ס"א יְהוָה.

The Masorah is a vast body of textual criticism on the Hebrew Scriptures including notes on features of writing and on the occurrence of certain words on variant sources and instructions for pronunciation and other comments that were written between 600 and 900 AD by Jewish scribes in the margins at the end of the text. This is included as a standard critical apparatus in Ginsburg’s Masoretic text.

125 In *Bereshit / Genesis 20:4*, *Shmot / Exodus 15:17*, and *Bamidbar / Numbers 14:17*
 the marginal Masorah contains a very significant note on the name Adonai. The
 note in the Masorah on “Adonai” concerning the manuscript evidence is
 consistent with the rabbinic tradition on the use of the circumlocution for the
 Name of God. The Masorah note indicates that in other manuscripts, such as the
 130 “*First edition of the entire Bible, Soncino 1488*,” the “*Third edition of the Bible*,”
 “*Brescia 1494*,” and the “*Pentateuch, Brescia 1492*” the Word Adonai is
 replaced with the YHVH.

פרשת שלח-לך ספר במדבר פרק יד פסוק יז

17 v. י' רבתי. 17 v. ברוב ספרים כ"י יהוה וכן ד"ב. 18 v. ס"א חסד ואמת וכן ח"ש,
 ת"י ות"ע: עיין שמות ל"ד ו'. 18 v. ס"א ופ"שע וְחַמְצָאָה וכן ח"ש, ת"י ות"ע: עיין
 שמות ל"ד ז'. 18 v. בזנבוקי וְנָקָה בסגול. 20 v. ס"א פְּדַבְרִיךָ מלא וכן ח"ש, חד"ד
 וד"ו. 21 v. כן ירושלמי, בהללי כְּבַד חסר. 22 v. כן בהללי, ירושלמי פְּקְלֵי חסר.
 23 v. כן ב"א, ב"ג וְכָל- בגעיא, נ"א ב"א וְכָל- בגעיא, וב"ג וְכָל- בלא געיא. 24 v. כן
 ירושלמי, בהללי יוֹרִישָׁנָה מלא יו"ד. 25 v. סביר הַמְדַבְּרָה, כס"א הַמְדַבְּרָה כתיב וקרי
 135 וכן בח"ש. 27 v. כן ב"א, ב"ג אֶת- בגעיא.

This means that in some alternate texts, the tetragramaton (YHVH) is used rather
 than Adonai. Thus, the manuscript evidence and critical analysis of the Hebrew
 Bible supports our interpretation that Avraham was speaking to the Lord God
 140 Almighty. It is clear the Masorets believed the text in *Bereshit / Genesis 18:1-3*
 to be a reference for God Himself appearing to Avraham when the word Adonai is
 written with the qametz. In addition to this, there is rabbinic commentary in the
Talmud Bavli Shabbat 127a and *Shavuot 35b* that contains dialog on the text that
 Avraham is speaking to God. As mentioned earlier, check the context of these
 145 Scriptures; the context also suggests when Adonai is pointed with the qametz, in
 the absence of the Name (YHVH), the One being addressed (spoken to) is the
 Lord God Almighty. It is interesting to note also that the angels went down to
 Sodom to see what was said was happening and God Himself did not go to that
 wicked place.

150 There is overwhelming evidence that the use of Adonai with the qametz is
 referring to the Name (YHVH) of God. In addition to this evidence, the grammar
 of the Hebrew text itself gives credence to this interpretation. The text begins

פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק יח פסוק א-

ה
 א וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלֵי נִי מְמַרָא וְהוּא י' שָׁב פְּתַח-הָא הָל
 פְּחֵם הַיּוֹם: ב וַיֵּשָׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהוּא שָׁל לְשֵׁה אַנְשִׁים
 נֹצְעִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיִּרְץ לְקַדְמָתָם מִפְּתַח הָא הָל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ
 אַרְצָה: ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֵד נִי אִם-נָא מִצְאָתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֵל-נָא
 תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ: ד יִקַּח-נָא מִעֵט-מִים וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם
 וְהִשְׁעֵנוּ תַחַת הַעֵץ: ה וְאָקַחְהָ פַת-לֶחֶם וְסַעְדוּ לְבַבְכֶם אַחַר
 תַעֲבֹרוּ כִי-עַל-כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל-עַבְדְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵּן תַעֲשֶׂה
 כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:

with the YHVH (Name of God) that He appeared to Avraham and then speaks
 of the three men. When Avraham speaks, He speaks in the second
person singular inviting all three men to stay and eat. The narrative of the
 text switches between plural and singular (examine the context,
 verses 18:1-14). The

ongoing conversation between Avraham and the men, the switching between plural and singular, and the textual variant in the Masorah indicate without a doubt the One whom Avraham is speaking to is God.

170 The passages in this week's Parashah suggest that in some instances within Scripture, God takes on the form of a man in order to interact with mankind. Note also that based upon the context of the passages, Avraham was not surprised by God appearing to him as a man. According to these verses and later verses where God reveals to Avraham what He is about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah, it is clear that though God can take on human form he does not give up His divine nature and authority. This is very important to remember while reading the apostolic writings in *John 1:1-14*.

ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ 1:1-18

180 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων: καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης: οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ. οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. **Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.**

195 Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων, Οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον, Ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν. ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν, καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος: ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο. θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε: μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

205 These verses the Apostle John wrote that “*the word of God tabernacled among us*” (וַיִּשְׁכֵּן בְּשָׂר וּדְבַר נְהִיָּה בֶן יְחִיד לְאֲבִיּוֹ רַב חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת) is understood to mean that the Word being God became a man. The Greek translation of *John 1:14* says “Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας” saying that “the word became

John 1:1-18

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 1:2 He was in the beginning with God. 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 1:5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 1:6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 1:7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 1:8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. 1:9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 1:13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 1:15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’ 1:16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 1:17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (NASB)

210 flesh” (λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο) and “tented” (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us. The Greek text is drawing upon the Torah understanding that God tabernacled with man in the Mishkhan saying that “*the Word tabernacled among us*” (וישכן (בתוכנו). According to the Torah, the Mishkhan (tabernacle) was designed in such a way to describe how God could dwell among men and yet remain on His throne in heaven. The Lord God also can tabernacle in our hearts by His Ruach Hakodesh (Holy Spirit). The concept that the Word can make His dwelling here among men according to *John 1:14* is not without precedence in the Torah considering this week’s Parashah on *Bereshit / Genesis 18*. John tells us that it is the divine Word (מִמְרָא, Memra) that had come down to dwell among us. The Torah indicates that God came down in human form to speak with Avraham and to reveal to him what He was about to do with Sodom and Gemorah. The difference here is that it is through the Word we can know God personally and this is why it is important that we take the time to daily study God’s Word. Our understanding of these verses coupled with this week’s Parashat show the importance of studying the Bible in order to know God and His will for our lives.

220 Examine the following verses from the apostolic writings, *Matthew 24:35, Mark 8:38, 13:31, Luke 6:47, 9:26, 21:33, 24:44, John 5:47, 14:24, and 15:7*. Yeshua says “*my words*” in these verses. If we are to understand that God can take on human form, according to *John 1:14* Yeshua is the Word (מִמְרָא, Memra), the living Word of God, how much more significant are these words Yeshua is telling

230 us? The Memra (מִמְרָא, Word) according to rabbinic thought is the creative work of God, the agent by which God created the world. These concepts are very similar to what is written about Yeshua in *Colossians 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist*.

235 According to the scriptures, it is in and through Yeshua whereby we are saved since the living Word of God made atonement for our sins. The atonement that Yeshua brought is also paralleled in this week’s Parashah on the binding of Yitzchak (Isaac) also known as the Akedah. After Avraham had received the son of the promise God had given in *Bereshit / Genesis 18*, the Lord asks him to sacrifice his son on Mount Moriah.

פרשת לך לך ספר בראשית פלק כב פסוק א-ח

245 א וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֵלֹהִים הִים נָסָה אֶת-אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי ב
 וַיֹּאמֶר קַח-נָא אֶת-בְּנֶךְךָ אֶת-יִצְחָק וְאֶשֶׁר-אַהַבְתָּ אֶת-יִצְחָק וְלָךְ לָךְ אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַמִּדְבָּר וְהַעֲלֵהוּ
 שָׁם לַעֲלֹה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אִמַּרְתִּי לְךָ וַיִּשְׁכַּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת-יָמָיו וַיִּקַּח
 אֶת-יִשְׁעֵי בְנֵי אֱתוֹ וְאֶת יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּבְקַע עֲצֵי עֵלֶה וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הַמִּקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר-אָמַר לוֹ
 הָאֵלֹהִים ד בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת-הַמִּקְוֹם מֵרָחֵק הֵן וַיֹּאמֶר
 250 אַבְרָהָם אֶל-יִצְחָק וְשָׁבוּ-לָכֶם פֹּה עִם-הַחֲמוֹר וְאֲנִי וְהַנְּעָר גִּלְכָה עַד-כֹּה וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִשְׁבַּח
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת-עֲצֵי הָעֵלֶה וַיִּשְׂם עַל-יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת-הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת-הַמַּאֲכָלֹת
 וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו ז וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל-אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר

Bereshit / Genesis 22:1-8

22:1 Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ 22:2 He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.’ 22:3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 22:4 On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. 22:5 Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.’ 22:6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. 22:7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ And he said, ‘Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’ 22:8 Abraham said, ‘God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ So the two of them walked on together. (NASB)

הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהַעֲצִים וְאֵיחָהּ הַשְּׂהָ לַעֲלֹתָ לַיהוָה: ח וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־הַיְהוָה לֹא־הָשָׂה לִּי הַשְּׂהָ לַעֲלֹתָ לַיהוָה בְּנִי וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו:

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The Lord is testing Avraham by asking him to turn his son into a burnt offering (וַיֹּאמֶר קָח-נָא אֶת-בְּנֶךָ אֶת-יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר-אַהַבְתָּ אֶת-יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ-לְךָ אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרִיָּה (וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לַעֲלֹתָ לַיהוָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ). Imagine what was running through Avraham’s mind when the Lord asked this of him. I would think there is nothing more sickening to a man’s natural instinct than killing his own son and even more so the only son that was a gift from God. I am certain that Avraham had to be internally torn by this request and had run scenarios through his head in an attempt to resolve this while recognizing that the command to offer his son as a sacrifice was not an immoral act. The conclusion Avraham had come to is found in *Bereshit / Genesis 22:7*, (וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־הַיְהוָה לֹא־הָשָׂה לִּי הַשְּׂהָ לַעֲלֹתָ לַיהוָה בְּנִי וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם) that God would provide a lamb for the burnt offering. When God asked Avraham to offer his son, Avraham had two choices (i) to refuse to kill his son or (ii) to obey. While Avraham and his son Yitzchak walked I am sure Avraham understood the implications of what he was about to do. Yet he remained faithful in the Lord that all was going to be ok. Avraham made a connection between faith and reality which drove him forward in his obedience to the Lord. The Lord saw his obedience and stopped him short of carrying out the command in *Bereshit / Genesis 22:12*.

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Bereshit / Genesis 22:12
22:12 He said, ‘Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ (NASB)

פִּרְשֵׁת לֶךְ לְךָ סֹפֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית פִּלְק כִּב פְּסוּק יב

יב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים-יְיָ אֶל-יִצְחָק וְאֵל-הַבָּעַר וְאֵל-תַּעֲשֵׂה לֹא מְאוּמָה כִּי | עֲתָה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי-יִרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה וְלֹא אֶתְשׂ אֶת-בְּנֶךָ אֶת-יִצְחָק מִמִּנִּי:

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While reading *Bereshit / Genesis 22:12* the phrase “כִּי-יִרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה” is quite interesting. Avraham’s readiness to offer his son proved to God that he was a יִרָא אֱלֹהִים a God fearer. The phrase יִרָא אֱלֹהִים occurs five times in all of the Tanach, once in *Bereshit / Genesis 22*, once in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 25*, twice in *Job* chapter 1 and 2, and once in *Kohelet / Ecclesiastes 7*.

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בְּרֵאשִׁית כִּב | עֲתָה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי-יִרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה וְלֹא חֲשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֵי דְבָרִים כִּי עֵינֶיךָ וַיִּגַּע וְלֹא יָרָא אֱלֹהִים: יִשְׁוֹהֶיהָ בְּהִנִּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אִיּוֹב א אִישׁ תָּם וְיָשָׁר יִרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע: ט וַיִּצְעַן הַשָּׁטָן אֶת־יְהוָה אִיּוֹב ב אִישׁ תָּם וְיָשָׁר יִרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע וְעִדְנֹו מִחֲנוּק בְּתַמְתּוֹ קָהֳלַת ז אֶת־יִצְחָק כִּי-יִרָא אֱלֹהִים יֵצֵא אֶת־כָּלָם: יט הַחֲכָמָה תַּעֲזֹ לֶךְ

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Avraham followed the mitzvah (command) to offer his son rather than to follow his own feelings. As a result, the Lord calls him a יִרָא אֱלֹהִים (God fearer). The reason being, Avraham was a man of high moral character, the thought of killing his own son had to have been very difficult. (Note that the biblical text does not detail the struggle Avraham had to have had in his heart over this command from God). As a result of Avraham overcoming his thoughts and following through

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with God's command (up until the point when God stopped him see *Bereshit / Genesis 22:12*), God promised Avraham with an oath (see *Bereshit / Genesis 22:16*) that he shall never break His covenant with him and his children. 295

וַיִּקְרָא מֵאֵד יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָהָם שְׁנֵית מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם: טז וַיֹּאמֶר בֵּי נַשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם-יְהוָה כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ אֶת-בְּנִיךָ אֶת-יְחִידְךָ: יז כִּי-בָרַךְ אֲבָרְכְךָ וְהִרְבֵּה אַרְבֵּה אֶת-זַרְעֲךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָחוּל אֲשֶׁר עַל-שָׁפַת הַיָּם וַיִּרְשׁ זַרְעֲךָ אֶת שְׂעַר אֲיִבָיו: יח וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ 300

The oath that God makes with Avraham includes that all of the nations of the earth (כָּל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ), will be blessed in his seed (וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזַרְעֲךָ). As a result of Avraham's faith and willingness to offer his only son, we find a "Messianic expectation" of what God was planning to do in Yeshua the Messiah. The Torah provides for us a future expectation, that all of the people of the earth would be blessed and that God would provide the Lamb for atonement. 305

Yeshua the Messiah is the "Lamb of God" that takes away the sins of the world (see *John 1:29*). It is interesting that Yitzchak asks Avraham where the lamb is for the sacrifice (*Bereshit / Genesis 22:7-8*) and Avraham says to Yitzchak that God will provide a Lamb. Both Avraham and Yitzchak were expecting a Lamb for the offering. According to the Scriptures, God provides a ram instead of a lamb, *Bereshit / Genesis 22:13* (וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה-אֵיל) (אֲחֵר נֶאֱחָז בַּסֶּבֶךְ בְּקִרְבָּנוֹ וַיִּלְךְ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הָאֵיל וַיַּעֲלֶהוּ לְעֹלָה תַחַת בְּנוֹ: Avraham and Yitzchak were looking for the Lamb of God as the appropriate animal for the sacrifice. Could this also be an example on how Yitzchak was unacceptable as a sacrifice whereas Yeshua, God's Son is acceptable? Could this also parallel Moshe's offer of himself in *Shemot / Exodus 32* and God's refusal to blot out Moshe from the book of life on behalf of the people? The parallels between Yeshua and Yitzchak are amazing, (i) they were born by a miracle, (ii) they are the only begotten sons; the only begotten of Avraham (according to the promise, *Bereshit / Genesis 22:2*) and the only begotten of God (*John 3:16*), (iii) they were both to be sacrificed by their fathers at Mount Moriah, (iv) they were to be resurrected (Note that Avraham had faith that Yitzchak would be resurrected, see *Bereshit / Genesis 22:5, Ivrit / Hebrews 11:17-19, Pirkei Rabbi Eliezer and Mekilta Simeon*), (v) they were willing to be sacrificed and (vi) they demonstrated that one life may be offered to make atonement for another (i.e. the lamb/ram for Yitzchak and Yeshua for mankind). 310 315 320 325

Avraham learned to develop the capacity to adjust and follow through with what God had requested. We may not experience the challenges Avraham and Yitzchak faced but we will encounter our own unique set of difficulties. God has given us the unique ability/capacity to rise above our circumstances with His help. Until we are able to come to terms with what we have been dealt in life we will never cultivate happiness. Avraham cultivated contentment in the circumstance of the Akedah by trusting in the Lord and in His promise. The key to Avraham's success was resting in the knowledge that God is ultimately in control. With the future expectation that God is going to send His lamb into the world, to make atonement for everyone who places their faith in Him, and the covenantal promise, we know today that Yeshua is the Lamb of God, the Messiah, the one who came to redeems us from our sins. Quite honestly, it is difficult some times to rest in the knowledge that God is in control because we feel what life has 330 335

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340 dealt us is just overwhelming. The one thing we can be certain of is that Yeshua
laid his life down for our sins and was raised from the grave alive. Studying the
Torah, we know that God has revealed himself to us in many ways, each of the
ways God revealed himself established a precedent looking forward to the
345 Messiah so that *“in these last days He has spoken to us in His Son, whom He
appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”* (Ivrit /
Hebrews 1:2). Though life comes with many twists and turns, the one thing is for
sure, we can trust in the Living Word of God, Yeshua the Messiah, the sure and
solid foundation of our faith. Let’s pray.

350 Heavenly Father,

Thank You for revealing Yourself to us throughout the Scriptures. Help
me to understand and apply all that I have learned this week to deepen my
355 relationship and understanding of You. Help me to know without a doubt, what
You have established in Your Son Yeshua the Messiah because of Your mercy
and love for me. Please forgive me of my sins; I confess the wickedness that
dwells in my heart. I believe Yeshua laid down His life for me as the Lamb of
God, as it is laid out in the Messianic expectation in the Torah. I believe that He
360 (Yeshua) was raised up to life from the grave as the Scriptures say in fulfillment
of the covenant promise You made to us. Thank You Lord for making the truth
of Your Son known to me today and thank You for forgiving me and redeeming
me from my sins. Help me to serve You Lord by faith. Please come and work in
my life each day and help me to hear Your voice. Thank You Lord for everything
365 You have done for me. I give You all of the glory, the honor, and the praise
forever and ever.

In Yeshua’s (Jesus’) Name I pray! Amen!

370 **What to pray:**

- *Ask the Lord to help you to understand the Messianic expectations that He provided in the Torah.*
- *Ask the Lord to help you to draw near to Him. Ask the Lord to help you “to hear His voice” and “to hold fast to Him.”*
- *Thank the Lord for lifting the burden of sin and revealing His truth in your heart and life.*

380 **Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!**

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever