

וַיֵּרָא

VAYERA/AND HE APPEARED Bereshith/Genesis 18:1-22:24

We begin with יהוה making an **appearance** (וַיֵּרָא) to Abraham:

***Bereshith 18:1** Then יהוה appeared (וַיֵּרָא) to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.*

How exactly did יהוה make Himself **known** to Abraham? The story implies that **His appearance** was **in human form**:

***Bereshith 18:2** So he lifted his eyes and looked (וַיֵּרָא), and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw (וַיֵּרָא) them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,*

The concept of “**seeing**” something runs throughout this parasha. The **simple sense** of the **verb** is just to be able to **see with your eyes**, but it can also be used for a **special understanding of the Word** or a **prophetic insight**. One of the most **difficult concepts** for our **Jewish brothers** to consider is the **possibility of the Almighty appearing as a man**. I cannot with certainty tell you who these **three individuals are**, but a literal interpretation of the following verses seems to say that **at least one of these “men” is Yah in the flesh**.

***Bereshith 18:13** And יהוה said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?'"¹⁴ "Is anything too hard for יהוה? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."*

***Bereshith 18:16** Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way.¹⁷ And יהוה said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing,*

***Bereshith 18:22** Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before יהוה.²³ And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?...²⁶ So יהוה said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes...³² Then he said, "Let not Adonai be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."³³ So יהוה went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.*

According to all rabbinic commentaries, **Abraham** was the paradigm of **kindness and hospitality**. To understand how this is so, we may have to adjust our **definition** of “**kindness**” (chesed - חֶסֶד). The **Biblical definition** of “**kindness**” does not mean **blindly giving without investigating its ultimate impact and benefit**. Running **parallel with kindness** must be “**justice**”. Even as **Abraham interceded for Sodom**, he came to the point where he saw their **utter corruption** and

was **prepared for their destruction**. The residents of **Sodom** were **not worthy** and to shower them with “**kindness**” and **extra chances would only yield bitter fruit**.

Abraham’s “kindness” was displayed in the **genuine care** he took of his **guests**. He showed **hospitality** to his guests as he met not only their **physical needs**, but also provided them with **spiritual nourishment**. He made them comfortable as he **washed their feet** and had them **rest under a tree**.

Bereshith 18:4 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree" (עץ).

The **Hebrew** indicates this was not just “**a tree**”, but “**the tree**” (עץ) therefore **symbolically** pointing to the **Tree of Life**. It was **Abraham’s intention**, therefore, that the **conversation** taking place **under “the tree”** would be centered on the **Creator of the universe** and His **purpose for our lives**.

While **kindness, hospitality, justice, and righteousness** are words that describe **Abraham**, the **residents of Sodom** could be described as being **unfriendly, unjust, and selfish**. **Rabbi Menachem Leibtag**, however, paints a **different** picture of **Sodom** than perhaps we’re used to. Instead of thinking of it as a city of **sexual deviants** and **perverts**, he comes to the conclusion that it was a **city with culture**...in fact, **not too different** than the **society** that we are a part of.

Leibtag draws to our attention the **two seemingly unrelated topics** of **Bereshith 18 and 19**:

1. **The announcement that Sarah will give birth to Isaac**
2. **The destruction of Sodom and the rescue of Lot**

Between these two stories, we are told the reason “**why**” Elohim must **first consult Abraham before destroying Sodom**:

Bereshith 18:17 And ה' said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, ¹⁸ "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹ "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of ה', to do righteousness and justice, that ה' may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

Note that there is a **connection** between ה׳׳s **revelation of the destruction** that He is about to do to **Sodom** and the **righteousness and justice** that will characterize **Abraham’s descendents**. Thus, these **descendents** were **destined to become a model nation** that would hopefully one day, **through their witness, save societies** such as **Sodom**.

Now as we study **Abraham’s intercession** for **Sodom**, we notice that **he does not ask** for Elohim to simply **save the “righteous”** of **Sodom**, but he **begs for the entire city to be saved**:

Bereshith 18:24 "Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?"

Why does Abraham not simply ask for the righteous to be saved? Because he is **hoping** that if there are **enough righteous**, that they will one day lead the others to **proper repentance (teshuva)**. Now we can also understand **why Abraham stopped at 10**, for **any less** than that would have a **slim chance** of making a **serious impression** upon an **entire community**. This is where the **Jewish concept** of a **minyan** comes from. **Ten** is the **minimum number** of people for **public prayer**.

So already we can see a **connection** between the **birth announcement of Isaac** and the **destruction of Sodom**, as **דָרָר** introduces the beginning of **Abraham's descendents** who will become a **people** who will be the **saving grace** of **future cities** like **Sodom**. It is interesting that there were only **eight righteous people** when the **earth was flooded**, **not enough** to hold back the **deluge**.

We have been accustomed to connecting the city of **Sodom** to the sin of **sodomy**, yet the **prophets** tell a **different story**. We will read of a **city** that was **wealthy**, yet lacking in **social justice** and **kindnesses**. They were **unwilling** to **help the poor and the needy**:

Ezekiel 16:49 "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."⁵⁰ "And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.

Sadly, **Isaiah** will compare **Jerusalem** (who was supposed to be the **model of righteousness and justice**), to **Sodom and Gomorrah**. Notice, however, that there is always a **faithful remnant**:

Isaiah 1:9 Unless דָרָר of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah.¹⁰ Hear the word of דָרָר, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the Torah of our Elohim, You people of Gomorrah:¹¹ "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says דָרָר ...Cease to do evil,¹⁷ Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow...¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;²⁰ But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of דָרָר has spoken.²¹ How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers.

A few verses later, **Isaiah** speaks of the **restoration of Jerusalem**, which is connected with **justice and righteousness**:

Isaiah 1:26 I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."²⁷ Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness.

Jeremiah tells us that it is by **practicing justice and righteousness** that we can **"know" Him**.

Jeremiah 22:13 " Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness And his chambers by injustice, Who uses his neighbor's service without wages And gives him nothing for his work,...¹⁵ "Shall you reign because you enclose yourself in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink, And do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him.¹⁶ He judged the cause of the poor and needy; Then it was well. Was not this knowing Me?" says דָרָר.¹⁷

"Yet your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness, For shedding innocent blood, And practicing oppression and violence."

The themes of **justice and righteousness** become very **Messianic** as **Jeremiah** speaks of the **ideal king** who will bring about the **restoration**:

Jeremiah 23:5 " Behold, the days are coming," says יְהוָה, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute justice and righteousness in the earth. ⁶ In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: יְהוָה OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Righteousness, justice, hospitality, and kindness are predominant themes in the **Renewed Covenant**. We know that **our righteousness** is imputed to us by **faith in Messiah**. However, many verses refer to the **command of living righteously, something that was not done in Sodom**:

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on Adonai out of a pure heart.

Titus 1:7 ... not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,

James also gives a description of **religion** that lines up with **Abraham's ways**:

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before Elohim and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

From **Yeshua's** words, we understand **how our treatment of the needy** relates to **Him**:

Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Adonai, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸ 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹ 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰ "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

The **Almighty** is **righteous and just**, thus we **emulate His ways**. These are the **traits Abraham displayed**, thus he becomes a **model** for us. And of course the **Messiah** is the **perfect example of living out righteousness**.

Next we will turn our **attention** to the **unrighteousness** and the **injustices of Sodom**:

Bereshith 18:20 And יְהוָה said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave,

Rabbinical sources tell us that the residents of Sodom had decreed that **whoever would give a morsel of bread to the needy would be burned with fire**. They had made a pact together **not to entertain guests** from outside, but **only to steal from them**. They did not want **anyone** who was **not rich** to remain in their city.

When the **two messengers arrived** in Sodom, it is **Lot** who is **sitting at the gate**. **Lot's position** is significant because **initially Lot** had only **pitched his tent toward Sodom**:

Bereshith 13:12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.

In our parasha we find out that **Lot has moved into a house in the evil city** and he has even been **elevated** to a **position of leadership** as he sits at the **gate**. **Lot** is the **epitome of compromise**. Although he was a “**righteous**” man, he was **trying to walk the fence between two opposing worldviews that can never coexist peacefully**. He made **mistakes**, but we also see some **good** in **Lot**. Let's take a look at some of the **hospitality** he may have learned from his **uncle** as we compare the two:

- *Bereshith 19:1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.*
- *Bereshith 18:2 So he (Abraham) lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground*
 - We notice that **Abraham “runs”** to meet his guests, and **Lot merely “rises”**. Yet, we should also note that while **they both bow**, **Abraham “bows himself to the ground”** and **Lot bowed “with his face toward the ground”**. **Lot** seems to show an **extra gesture of respect** (perhaps because he is **younger** and **able to put his face to the ground**) and it is evident that he is **trying hard to honor his guests**.
- *Bereshith 19:3 But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he (Lot) made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.*
- *Bereshith 18:6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." ⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it.*
 - **Lot makes a simpler meal**, but is it **fair to compare**? It should be considered that the **messengers reached Abraham** in the “**heat of the day**”, at a time when a **large meal was generally eaten**. In contrast, the **messengers reach Lot “in the evening”** when **people were getting ready to go to bed**. A **quick and light meal** was therefore **appropriate**.

Now let's take another look at **Lot's decisions** and how his **compromise** with the **world** led to **disastrous results**. When **Lot and his daughters** escape from **Sodom**, they are given specific instructions to “**escape to the mountain**”:

Bereshith 19:17 So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountain (יָרֵד יְרֵד), lest you be destroyed."

Lot expresses **fear** in going “**to the mountain**” and **instead asks** to go to a **particular small city**:

***Bereshith 19:18** Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords!¹⁹ "Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but **I cannot escape to the mountain**, lest some evil overtake me and I die.²⁰ "See now, **this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one**; please let me escape **there** (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live."*

We are told that the name of this **small city** is **Zoar**:

***Bereshith 19:22** "Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the **name of the city** was called **Zoar**.*

Remember back in **Bereshith 13**, when **Abram and Lot** decided to **part ways**, and **Lot chose** the **plains of the Jordan valley**? Notice the mention of **Zoar** in the text:

***Bereshith 13:10** And **Lot** lifted his eyes and saw all the **plain of Jordan**, that it was well watered everywhere (before **הררר** destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of **הררר**, like the land of Egypt as you come to **Zoar**.*

We recall that **Lot chose** the “**plain of the Jordan**” for the reason that its **abundant river water** supply **alleviated the need to rely on יהוה’s provision of rain**. **Abram**, however, would live in the **mountains of Canaan** where he **WAS dependent on the rains of heaven**. That was **Lot’s first mistake in choosing wealth over his Uncle Abram**. Now take another look at **Bereshith 19:17** and see that **Lot is given the exact same choice again!** He is told **not** to “**stay anywhere in the plain**” and escape instead to “**the mountain**” (**הררר**).

It was a **second chance** for **Lot**. He is told to return to **THE mountain** (**הררר**)...back to the **place of Abraham**. **Instead Lot** begs for a **city, Zoar**, at the **edge of the plain**. **Zoar** means “**insignificant**” or “**small**”. **Lot** wanted **everything** and he ends up with “**nothing**”. Again **Lot changes his mind**. Instead of going to “**the mountain**”, where **Abraham resides**, he leaves **Zoar** and **settles with his daughters in other mountains**. In fact they end up in a **cave**. **Archeology** has shown that this area was **utterly barren and without population centers**. Because of **Lot’s fear** and his **worldly choices**, he and his daughters will **suffer the consequences**. Now **remember the sin of Sodom and not offering food to the needy?** Read what happens to the future **descendents of Lot**, the **Ammonites and Moabites**:

***Devarim/Deuteronomy 23:3** " An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of **הררר**; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of **הררר** forever,⁴ "because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.*

Lot and his daughters were told to **run far away from the area of Sodom** and into the arms of **Abraham**. We also, will be told to **leave the world’s system**:

***Revelation 18:4** And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.*

It is fascinating that **Yeshua** also gives a **warning** to “**flee to the mountains**”:

***Mark 13:14** "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*

Putting the pieces together, we see that this may be **a time when because of wicked inhabitants in Jerusalem, the city is compared to Sodom**. The **righteous** must therefore **flee to the mountains** because of **coming judgment**:

***Revelation 11:8** And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the **great city** which **spiritually** is called **Sodom** and Egypt, where also our Adonai was crucified.*

Okay, let's completely change directions and go to **Bereshith 22** which contains the event of the “**binding of Isaac**”, better known as the **Akeida** in **Judaism**. To begin with, we will make some **comparisons** between the story of **Ishmael** and the story of **Isaac**. **Common words** are made **bold**:

- **Bereshith 21:14** So Abraham **rose early in the morning**, and **took** bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.
- **Bereshith 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 the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which Elohim had told him.
 - In **both** cases **Abraham rises early to obey a divine command**. Both stories involve a **final parting of a son**; the **expulsion of Ishmael** and the **sacrifice of Isaac**.
- **Bereshith 21:17** And Elohim heard the voice of the **lad** (**לַדָּבָר**)
- **Bereshith 22:5** And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the **lad** (**לַדָּבָר**) and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."
 - **Both Ishmael and Isaac** are referred to as a “**ha-na'ar**” (**הַנְּעָר**), a **lad**.
- **Bereshith 21:15** And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs.¹⁶ Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.
- **Bereshith 22:10** And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.
 - In both cases, there is **danger to the son because of a parent**. **Ishmael's mother** wonders aimlessly in the desert and upon dehydration **casts her son away and leaves him to die**. **Abraham threatens Isaac's life with a knife**.
- **Bereshith 21:17** And Elohim heard the voice of the lad. Then the **angel** of Elohim **called** to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for Elohim has heard the voice of the lad where he is.
- **Bereshith 22:11** But the **Angel** of **יְהוָה** **called** to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."
 - **Angel calls** out to the **parent**.

- **Bereshith 21:19** Then Elohim opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink.
- **Bereshith 22:13** Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.
 - **Heavenly intervention** is followed by “seeing” the **solution to the problem of death: water** in the case of **Ishmael** and a **substitute sacrifice** in the case of **Isaac**.
- **Bereshith 21:18** "Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."
- **Bereshith 22:17** "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies."¹⁸ "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."
 - The angel gives the **promise of a great nation** before departing.

What is the **significance** of the **parallels** in these **stories**? I cannot give you a definitive answer, but could it be pointing to a **pattern** of the **letting go of a son** in order to **accomplish the will of the Almighty**? After **Abraham sent away Ishmael**, all of his **hope** would have been **centered on Isaac**. After he **let go of Isaac**, all of his **hope** would have had to be **centered on a promise to come**...that being the **promise of the Messiah**.

Let's consider now the **differences** in the **two stories** and see if we can come up with other insights:

1. In the **Akeida**, **Abraham** is depicted as **determined, calm, and courageous**. **He gets up early, prepares the wood, takes Isaac and sets out**. Without any **specific directions**, he **arrives at the divinely chosen place**. From the **conversation** between **Abraham and his son, Isaac** seems to **figure out** what is going on. Yet, **he neither cries nor begs for mercy**. **Isaac** also is **determined, calm, and courageous**. **Isaac** is the picture of **innocence**.

There is **definite unity** between **father and son**. Two times in the text we see the phrase “**they went together**” (יָצְאוּ יחד).

- **Bereshith 22:6** So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them **went together** (יָצְאוּ יחד).
- **Bereshith 22:8** And Abraham said, "My son, Elohim will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them **went together** (יָצְאוּ יחד).

2. **Hagar's behavior** in her journey is **not determined, calm or courageous**. Without **specific directions**, she becomes **desperate** and a **wanderer** (Bereshith 21:14). Her **attitude** spills over onto her **son**. (21:17). In contrast to the **oneness of Abraham and Isaac**, **Hagar and Ishmael** are **divided**, both **physically and emotionally** (21:16).

So can we find a **sod level teaching** here? Somehow, I can **identify more with Ishmael** than Isaac. I could never have been **calm and determined** for **three days leading up to my death**. And consider the **reason why Hagar and Ishmael found themselves cast off**. Was it not because of **their own sin** against the **son of promise**? **Isaac** was completely **innocent**; but like **Ishmael**, **our**

own sin has also separated us from the **Father**. Did you notice the **implication** that **Ishmael** was **crying out** because he was **lost**? **Ishmael** (יִשְׁמָעֵאל) is **Hebrew** for “**El will hear**”:

*Micah 7:7 Therefore I will look to ייָיָ; I will wait for the Elohim of my **salvation** (root of **Yeshua**); My Elohim will hear me.*

Now if **Isaac** is the **shadow picture of Yeshua**, then perhaps the **sinful Ishmael** could be a picture of **us**. Our **sin dilemma** and **His solution** are pictured in the **stories of Abraham (Father) and his sons**. **Isaac** was declared to be the “**only son**” of **Abraham** (Bereshith 22:2), yet we know that **Ishmael** was also his **son**. **Yeshua** is the **only Son** of the **Father** (John 3:16), yet we also are declared to be **sons** of the **Almighty** through our **acceptance of Messiah** (John 1:12).

Let’s look at some of the **similarities** between the **stories of Isaac and Yeshua**:

- **Angels proclaimed the births** of both **Isaac** and **Yeshua** (Bereshith 17:19; Matthew 1:20-21)
- Both were **miraculous births** – **Sarah** was **past childbearing** and **Miriam** (Mary) was a **virgin**
- Both **Isaac** and **Yeshua** were **circumcised on the 8th day**.
- **Abraham** is told to **sacrifice his only son** (Bereshith 22:2); **Our Heavenly Father sacrificed His only Son**
- **Three days** after **Isaac** was “**condemned**” to **death**, he **arose from the altar alive** (Bereshith 22:3); **Yeshua arose on the 3rd day!**
- **Isaac** was required to **carry wood for his own sacrifice** (Bereshith 22:6); **Yeshua carried His cross**.
- **Abraham bound Isaac and laid him on the wood of the altar** (Bereshith 22:9); **Yeshua was nailed to the cross**.
- **Isaac offered up no resistance**; **Yeshua went willingly to the cross**.
- “**Elohim will provide Himself the Lamb**” (Bereshith 22:8); **Yeshua was declared to be “the lamb of Elohim”**.
- The **actual sacrifice (the ram)** was a **substitute** (Bereshith 22:13); **Yeshua became our substitute on the cross**.
- The **historian Josephus** writes that **Isaac was something over 25 years old** at the time of the **Akeida**....somewhere **between 25 and 37**. This makes him **possibly the same age as Messiah** when He was **crucified**.

Are you up for one more **comparison**? Let’s try now to **link the Akeida** with the **Mt. Sinai experience**.

Both incidents are referred to as a **test**:

- *Bereshith 22:1 Now it came to pass after these things that **Elohim tested Abraham**, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."*
- *Shemot/ Exodus 20:18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not Elohim speak with us, lest we die."²⁰ And Moses said to the people, "Do not*

fear; for Elohim has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

The **successful conclusion** of the **Akeida** takes place when the angel declares that **Abraham's "fear of Elohim"** has been established; the above text (**Shemot 20:20**) echoes this **hope** of proper "**fear**":

***Bereshith 22:11** But the Angel of יי' called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."¹² And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for **now I know that you fear Elohim**, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."*

Now there is something else that **connects** these **two occurrences**. It will be the **appearance** of the **shofar** on **Mt. Sinai** and the **ram's horns** (**source of the shofar**) in the story of the **Akeida**:

***Shemot/Exodus 19:16** Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the **sound of the shofar** was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.¹⁷ And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with Elohim, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because יי' descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.¹⁹ And when the **blast of the shofar sounded long** and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and Elohim answered him by voice.*

***Bereshith 22:13** Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a **ram** caught in a thicket by its **horns**. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.*

The **shofar** is, of course, an **instrument** made from the **horn of a ram**. The **ram** reminds one of **Abraham's willing sacrifice...** of that which was **most precious** to him, **his only son**. The **curve** in the **horn** is said to **mirror** the "**turning**" of the **one who repents**. In the **Talmud**, we read the words of **Rabbi Abbahu**, "**Why do we sound the shofar?** Because the **Holy One**, blessed be He, said: '**Sound before Me a ram's horn so that I may remember on your behalf the binding of Isaac the son of Abraham, and account it to you as if you had bound yourselves before me.**'"

Let that quote from the **Talmud** sink in. It is saying that it is as if **WE** are the ones being **sacrificed**. The **shape** of the **shofar** is also **linking sin** with the **binding of Isaac**. **Isaac**, therefore, becomes a picture of a **sacrifice for sin** and as the **Talmud** points out, **we also have been sacrificed with Him**:

***Galatians 2:20** "I have been crucified with Messiah; it is no longer I who live, but Messiah lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of Yah, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

The **Jewish sage Rashi** also explains that the **shofar heard at Mt. Sinai** comes from the **horn** of the **ram substituted for Isaac**! The **Ramban** teaches that the **shofar of Isaac**, or the **awe of Isaac**, is such an **integral part of the Mt. Sinai experience**, that the **Akeida** must be **understood** as some type of **precursor to the events at Sinai**! In other words, the **connections** that all these **wise Jewish sages** are making, are with the **Akeida** (picturing the **crucifixion of the Messiah**), **our sin and repentance**, and the **revealing of the Torah on Mt. Sinai**!

At the end of Bereshith 22, **Abraham** goes to **Beer-Sheba**. **Isaac's next appearance** will be when we see him in a **field**, ready for his **bride**. This becomes another **parallel with Messiah** who after his **sacrifice**, also **spends time preparing for his bride**. The Targums tell us that the **reason Isaac** does **not return** is that Abraham sent him to the **school of Shem** for a few **years**. Since **Melchizedek (King of Righteousness)** is identified with **Shem**, and he lived in **Shalem (Jerusalem)**, it is only natural that he would be sent there for **instruction**.

There are too many details to cover, but continue on with your own search. Next week we will read more of **Isaac** and the selection of his **beloved bride**.

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle