

Vayera
“And He appeared”

Torah Reading: Genesis (Bereshit) 18:1 – 22:24
Haftarah Reading: II Kings 4:1-37

Study Questions

1. Name at least 4 trials which Abraham faced in this parasha. Describe them.
2. Why did Abraham laugh? Why did Sarah laugh? How was their laughter different?
3. Who were the three visitors?
4. Why was Lot in Sodom? Why did the Lord seek to rescue him?
5. What was Sodom’s crime which prompted the judgment from the Lord?
6. Why do you think Lot’s wife looked back?
7. What was the purpose for the story of Abimelech and Abraham? Did Abraham pass this test or not?
8. Why did Sarah want to send Hagar and Ishmael away? Was it right or wrong to have done so? Why?
9. Why did the Lord ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?
10. How do you think Isaac felt about it?
11. What does it mean when Abraham called the place Adonai Yireh?
12. What does the Haftarah reading II Kings 4:1-37 have in common with this parasha?

Memory Verse

“For Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him”. Bereshit 18:18

Study Notes

Test Time

- It is test time for Abraham
- The tests were not designed so that the Lord would discover something about Abraham but to show Abraham how much he had learned about God.
- Abraham also learned which areas in his life could use improvement

Our Tests

- Our tests are like our father Abraham’s. They are custom made for us by our heavenly Abba.
- They teach us how to grow in our trust in God

The Announcement

- Abraham has used many different names for God: God (Elohim), Lord (YHVH), The Almighty (El Shaddai), and the Most High God (El Elyon). This shows Abraham’s depth of knowledge of who God is.
- God announces to Abraham that he will have a son and Abraham laughs.
- The text seems to indicate laughing in disbelief but with a deep-seated assurance that God was being serious.
- God did not rebuke Abraham for his laugh but went on to say you shall name the

child Isaac ("He laughed").

- Sarah's laugh brought a mild rebuke. She may have been more skeptical but God encouraged her "Is anything beyond the Lord?" He asks.
- It seems God was leading her down a path of greater intimacy with Him.

Our Example of Faith

- Read Romans 4:18-25
- Abraham knew two things about God: 1) He brings to life that which was dead and 2) He calls into existence that which does not exist.

The Visitors

- Who were these three visitors?
- Why would Jews have difficulty believing that God visited Abraham in the flesh?
- What does the term 'HaShem' mean?

Sodom's Sin

- Why was Sodom destroyed? See Ezekiel 16:49
- Does this surprise you?

Lying Again?

- Abraham again lies about Sarah being his wife and puts another man in a bad spot.
- Scripture impartially relates both the failings and the virtues of its heroes
- It is helpful to see how our heroes of the faith had to continue in their growth (Hebrews 12:1)

Ishmael

- This is hard to understand. That it is ok to force a son out of the house.
- Bereshit 21:9 says Sarah saw Ishmael making sport. The term is "laughing". Ishmael may have been disrespecting God, his parents, or Isaac.
- Either way God tells Abraham to trust Him. He will take care of Ishmael.

Lech Lecha Again

- Just as the Lord told Abraham to "Go Out" back in Bereshit 12 he tells him here to do it again to Moriah.
- Moriah is believed to be the hill where the Temple was built. Some believe it was Golgotha. Either of those places carries great association with this situation.
- The first Lech Lecha was a call to make aliya (to go up) to the Promised Land. The second is a command to come even closer to the Lord, to the place where he will dwell intimately with His people.
- Abraham's response (22:1) to God's call was "Here I am". The same as Samuel, Elijah, and many other servants of God.

"It Will Become Clear"

- When Isaac asked where the sacrifice was Abraham responds by faith "God will provide".
- The word 'provide' is the common word for 'see'. The idea is God will 'make it clear or it will be seen'.
- Abraham trusted God to keep His Word.
- Hebrews 11:19 states Abraham could trust God because he reasoned that God

could 'raise the dead'.

Faith

- We can have amazing faith if we simply take into account what we know about our God.
- Every challenge from the Lord is in exact proportion to the knowledge of God we possess.
- Without knowledge, we would have little basis for trust. Without the exercise of that trust, we would not be able to function in life the way God intended.