

## Genesis 18

(18:1)

אֵלֶּיךָ = “terebinth” under BDB 18b.

חֶמֶד = “heat” under BDB 328b.

(18:2)

(18:3)

**Grammatical note** = Protasis of real condition begin with אִם or כִּי or אֲשֶׁר (rare).  
See Williams §515.

(18:4)

שָׁעַן = Niphal “lean, support oneself” under BDB 1043b.

**Grammatical note** = Qal passive? pointed as Pual? See Williams §159b.

(18:5)

פֶּתַח = “fragment, bit, morsel” under BDB 837b.

סָעַד = “support, sustain, stay” under BDB 703b.

(18:6)

קֶמַח = “flour, meal” under BDB 887b.

סֶלֶת = “fine flour” under BDB 701b.

לֹאשׁ = “knead” under BDB 534b.

(18:7)

רֶךָב = “tender, delicate, soft” under BDB 940a.

**Grammatical notes** = Anaphoric article – definite article on a noun that point back to previous mention of noun without article. See §Williams 83.

Imperfect + waw-consecutive. Complete action. Typically part of temporal sequence in past-time narrative. See Williams §178. This is important. How does Biblical Hebrew use different forms and “tenses”?

Omission of pronoun that is direct object of verb. See Williams §588.

(18:8)

הָמָּוֶה = “curd” under BDB 326a.

**Grammatical note** = Temporal כִּי – as soon as, at the very time. Object is precise time at which something happens. See Williams §83.

(18:9)

(18:10)

**Grammatical note** = Temporal כִּי – as soon as, at the very time. Object is precise time at which something happens. See Williams §262a.

(18:11)

חָדַל = “cease” under BDB 292b.

בָּלָה = “become old and worn out” under BDB 115a.

עֵדֶנָּה = “delight (sexual)” under BDB 726b. Hapax.

(18:12)

(18:13)

אֲמֵן = “verily, truly, indeed” (always in question) under BDB 53b.

**Grammatical note** = Emphatic אֲף – even, really. Significance or unexpected nature of what follows. After question = contrary to expectation. See §Williams 385.

(18:14)

**Grammatical note** = Absolute comparative מן – too... for. Object of מן is standard of comparison where something is excessive for something else. See Williams §262a, 318.

(18:15)

כחש = “be disappointing, deceive, fail, grow lean”, Piel “deceive” under BDB 471a.

**Grammatical notes** = Elliptic ל – no. Can stand for an entire sentence. See Williams §398.

Omission with negative ל – clause with ל often other words are omitted. See Williams §594.

(18:16)

שקף = Hiphil “look down” under BDB 1054b.

שלח = “send”, Piel “send away, dismiss” (including divorce) under BDB 1018a. Arm שלח. Arb *saraha* (*r = l*) “send forth, drive cattle to pasture, send messenger, and so on”. Akk probably *šalû* “send, hurl?”

(18:17)

כסה = Piel “cover” under BDB 491a.

המכסה מאברהם אשר אני עשה – Interesting construction. Literally “?-covering/concealing from-Abraham what I doing”

**Grammatical note** = A **subsequent circumstantial clause** explains circumstances that occur after the main clause. Its predicate is an imperfect verb. Note that Abraham will become יהיה a great and mighty nation. See Williams §495b.

<sup>1</sup>מאברהם

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<sup>1</sup> “Samaritan Pentateuch, Targum Jonathan add את”. Dialectal variation?

(18:18)

היו – Infinitive absolute of יהיה! Do not see that very often. Note יהיה יהיה construction = “And Abraham being will-be -> And Abraham will surely be”.

עצום = “mighty, numerous” under BDB 783a. Root עצם = “be vast, mighty, numerous”.

ונברכו – Where have we seen this before? See Genesis 12:3 = ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה.

(18:19)

This is crucial. Why does Yhwh choose Abraham? For what purpose? And/or why will Yhwh tell Abraham what he is doing? Sounds like Deuteronomy?

ידעתי<sup>2</sup>

למען<sup>3</sup>

לעשות צדקה ומשפט – We do not see these words paired elsewhere in Genesis. Compare Psalm 82 et passim.

And finally so that Yhwh can bring upon Abraham whatever he said. This sounds like the Priestly tradition.

(18:20)

זעקה = “cry, outcry” under BDB 277b. Root זעק = “cry, cry out, call”.<sup>4</sup>

כבד = “be heavy, weighty, burdensome, honoured”, Piel “make heavy; make honourable, glorify” under BDB 457a. Note the affix 3fs form!

(18:21)

<sup>2</sup> “Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek, Targum, Targum Jonathan, Vulgate ידעתי ‘I know/knew’” rather than ‘I knew/know him’.

<sup>3</sup> “Greek (Vulgate) οτι ‘that’”. Odd difference. Seems to be the difference between “I know him in order that...” and “I know him that he will...” Purpose compared to simple prediction. Is this consistent with what we see in the Psalms?

<sup>4</sup> “Samaritan Pentateuch צעקת compare verse 21”. Yeah we see to have some alternation here... or not.

הכצעקתה – Sheesh! Interrogative ה + preposition כ + צעקה + 3fs suffix = “?-as-outcry-her/its”.<sup>5</sup>

כלה = “be complete, at an end, finished, accomplished, spent” under BDB 477a.

הכצעקתה הבאה אלי עשו כלה – Literally “?-as-outcry-her that-comes to-me they-did completely => if they have done completely according to the outcry that has come to me”. Yuck.

ואם־לא אדעה – Wait... what? If not? then he will know???

(18:22)

ויהוה עודנו עמד לפני יהוה – This is one of the more famous examples of how scribes deliberately changed the text. Originally this read ויהוה עמד לפני אברהם but surely Yhwh does not stand before Abraham! as if a student before a teacher! Called a tiqqun sopher (plural tiqqune sopherim) or Tiq soph in the critical apparatus.

**Grammatical note = Participle as a predicate adjective.** A participle can function as a predicate adjective, asserting something about a substantive, and thus acting like a verb. A predicate adjective usually has the same gender and number as the subject, but lacks the article. See Williams §215b.

**Grammatical note = Locative לפני (in front of, before).** The preposition לפני can indicate a location in front of its object. See Williams §370.

(18:23)

אף = “also, yea > indeed” under BDB 64b. So האף = “really?”

ספה = “sweep or snatch away, catch up”, Niphal “be swept away, destroyed” under BDB 705a. Arb *safā* “(of wind) raise dust and carry it away”.

(18:24)

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<sup>5</sup> “Read with Codex Sev (=?), Greek, Targum, Latin יהוה?” Not sure what to make of this. Their outcry or her outcry? David Cotter notes the midrashim make much of this with a tail about a woman who was going to be burned.

וַאֲיִלִּי = II (adverb) “peradventure, perhaps” under BDB 19b.

וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא לְמַקּוֹם – Note ל for object of תִּשָּׂא.

**Grammatical note = לְמַעַן of advantage (for the sake of, for).** The object of the preposition לְמַעַן can be a person to whose advantage something is. For the sake of (the fifty righteous). See Williams §365.

**Grammatical note = שֵׁי of existence (there is).** The particle שֵׁי commonly indicates the existence of the substantive or substantival clause that follows it. When שֵׁי is used this way, it can often be translated ‘there is’ or ‘there are’. See Williams §477.

(18:25)

הִלְלִי = “profaned” under BDB 321a.

הִלְלִיָּהּ = “far be it, ad profanum!” under BDB 321a. Root חלל = “pollute, defile, profane”.

This is pretty strong language. Equivalent to μη γενοιτο? or stronger than that? Septuagint translates with μηδαμως = “by no means”.

What is the essence of his argument with or objection to God? This is somehow about God the judger of the earth... doing justice.

**Grammatical note = Comparative כִּי (as, like, such as).** The object of the preposition כִּי (or the compound כִּי־אֲשֶׁר) can be something to which something else is compared. When repeated, the meaning is often ‘the same as’. See Williams §256.

(18:26)

עָבוּר II = (preposition and conjunction) “for the sake of, on account of, in order that” under BDB 721a.

**Grammatical note = Resumptive וְ (then, untranslated).** Also called the **waw of resumption** or the **waw of linkage**, the conjunction וְ can begin a clause that

resumes the train of thought from the clause that precedes it. See Williams §440.

**Grammatical note = Conditional אִם (if).** The conjunction אִם can begin the protasis (the ‘if’ part) of a real conditional sentence. See Williams §453.

(18:27)

יאל II = Hiphil “shew willingness, be pleased, determine, undertake to do anything (and do it)” under BDB 383b. Arb *wa’ala* “take refuge with, escape, hasten to”. Sab ואל. Akk *ālu* “accept”. Note how the I י = I \*ו returns with a Hiphil prefix.

עָפָר = “ashes”? Cannot find in BDB even under root עפר.

אֲדַנִּי<sup>6</sup>

(18:28)

חסר = “lack, need, be lacking, decrease” under BDB 341a. Arm קִסַר “want, lack”. Arb *hasara* “remove, strip off; disappear, retire, fail”.

שחת = “go to ruin(?)”, Hiphil “spoil, ruin” under BDB 1007b. Arb *saḥata* “extirpate”. Tel Amarna *šahātu* “fall (especially of a city), be prostrate”. Akk *šētu* “flee, escape”. OArm (Zinjirli) שחת “destroy”. Arm שְחַת “mutilate”.

**Grammatical note = בְּ of cause (because).** Also called the beth causa, the preposition בְּ (or the compound בְּאִשֶּׁר) can indicate the cause of something else. The object of the preposition can be a noun, an infinitive construct, or a genitive substantival clause. See Williams §247.

(18:29)

ימצאון – Note the energetic(?) *nun*. As in Deuteronomy?

אעשה<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> “Cairo<sup>3</sup>, several manuscripts יהוה”.

(18:30)

חרה = “burn, be kindles, of anger” under BDB 354a. Arm חרי Pael “cause fire to burn” (rare). Zinj חרא “anger”. Arb *ḥarwatu(n)* “burning sensation in throat from rage and pain”. Note jussive form – “Let not...”

אל־נא יחר לאדני – Unusual syntax?

(18:31)

Note the slight variations between each stage of the conversation. Not simply Repeat And Say Same Things But Change the Number In Question.

אֲדַנִּי<sup>8</sup>

(18:32)

פַּעַם = “beat, foot, anvil, occurrence” under BDB 821b.

עשרה – Note the feminine form for ten men. Whereas before we had masculine plural. This is normal in biblical Hebrew. A kind of reverse polarity from two through ten.

**Grammatical note = Restrictive אַךְ (only, however).** The adverb אַךְ can be used to indicate that the word of clause that follows it is an exception to or a limitation of another statement in the context . This is sometimes subdivided into the restrictive and **exceptive** uses of אַךְ. See Williams §388.

(18:33)

Wait... that is it? Does the conversation result in some sort of resolution or agreement?

כלה = “be complete, at an end, finished, accomplished, spent” under BDB 477a.

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<sup>7</sup> “Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek ἀσκήθι compare Vulgate *percutiam* and verses 28, 31, 32”. Not sure what to make of this. Perhaps “destroy” is clearer than do?

<sup>8</sup> “A few manuscripts יהיה”. Hmm.

כְּאִשֶׁר כָּלָה לְדַבֵּר – Note the syntax. Literally “as-which/when he-finished to-speaking”.

They go their separate ways. Yhwh to (Sodom). Abraham to his “place”. Echoes of Genesis 12? 22?