

I. Abraham and Sarah

A. Introduction

B. Study:

1. Genesis 18:17-33

Questions:

- a. How is this a test of Abraham?
- b. What does it test for? And why is it important?
- c. In what way is Abraham “arguing” with God, and how is it that he really is not?

2. Genesis 22:1-19

Questions:

- a. How is this a test of Abraham?
- b. If we applauded Abraham for “arguing” with God in chapter 18, why wouldn’t we criticize him for not doing so here?
- c. Does the fact that the manifestation of God that approached Abraham in chapter 18 is Hashem (Adonai)

but it was Elohim at the beginning of chapter 22 make a difference

What is it?

Is your answer confirmed by the fact that the angel who stayed Abraham's hand was the angel of Hashem? What difference does that make to the import and direction of the story?

3. Genesis 24:12-21. This is a very long chapter, and we're looking only at a few verses.

Question:

Why do these few verses tell us all we need to know to confirm that Abraham's servant has succeeded in his mission to find Isaac the right wife?

4. I want to spend just a few moments talking about Sarah. She was a noble and really extraordinary woman with the greatest of virtues. But there was one moment in the whole Biblical account of her in which she (and Abraham) misjudged and actually sinned. **Genesis 16**

Questions:

- a. What do you make of Sarai's decision to offer up her maidservant to Abram to bear his child?
- b. What do you make of Hagar's treatment of Sarai once she got pregnant and Sarai's treatment then of her? Pay close attention to the words in the text.
- c. What should Sarai have done to Hagar instead?
- d. What do you make of God's reaction to Hagar in the desert? What does this teach us of Divine ethics?

Finally, you might note that soon after this story God renames Sarai and Abram as Sarah and Abraham. (Chapter 17) And you might wonder why.

Conclusion – What are the takeaways of our study today?