

PLEASE NOTE - The references below are taken from the 86-20 Index. Many verses have additional references that have not been included due to time & space. We are encouraged to do additional personal research.

(Genesis 18:1-8) 18 Afterward, Jehovah appeared to him among the big trees of Mam're while he was sitting at the entrance of the tent during the hottest part of the day. 2 He looked up and saw three men standing some distance from him. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them, and he bowed down to the ground. 3 Then he said: "Jehovah, if I have found favor in your eyes, please do not pass by your servant. 4 Please, let a little water be brought and have your feet washed; then recline under the tree. 5 Seeing that you have come here to your servant, let me bring a piece of bread so that you may refresh yourselves. Then you may go on your way." At this they said: "All right. You may do as you have spoken." 6 So Abraham hurried to the tent to Sarah and said: "Quick! Get three measures of fine flour, knead the dough, and make loaves of bread." 7 Next Abraham ran to the herd and chose a tender and good young bull. He gave it to the attendant, who hurried to prepare it. 8 He then took butter and milk and the young bull that he had prepared and set the food before them. Then he stood by them under the tree as they were eating.

*** w18 March p. 15 par. 6 The Delightful Course of Hospitality—So Needed! ***

6 For refreshments or a meal: In Bible times, hospitality normally included inviting someone to one's home for a meal. (Gen. 18:1-8; Judg. 13:15; Luke 24:28-30) An invitation to share food was an invitation to friendship and peace. Who should be among our primary guests? Those who are a regular part of our lives, the brothers and sisters in our congregation. When hard times come, will we not depend on one another? We need loyal friendships and peace with all of them. Interestingly, in 2011 the Governing Body changed the time of the Watchtower Study for the United States Bethel family from 6:45 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Why? The announcement stated that

more will likely be inclined to show and accept hospitality with fellow Bethelites when the meeting ends earlier. Other branch offices followed suit. This arrangement has drawn Bethel families closer than ever.

*** w14 6/1 p. 7 Have You Tasted the Bread of Life? ***

Nearly four thousand years ago, not far south of Bethlehem, Abraham's wife, Sarah, made freshly baked "loaves of bread" to feed three unexpected visitors. (Genesis 18:6) The "fine flour" that Sarah used may have come from emmer wheat or from barley. Sarah had to prepare this bread quickly and probably baked the dough on hot stones.—1 Kings 19:6.

Abraham's family prepared and baked their own bread, as this account indicates. Their nomadic lifestyle meant that Sarah and her servants likely could not bake bread in the type of ovens commonly used in Ur, Sarah's hometown. She prepared fine flour from local grain. This would have been a laborious task done by using a portable hand mill and possibly a mortar and pestle.

(Genesis 18:11, 12) . . . 12 So Sarah began to laugh to herself, saying: "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I really have this pleasure?"

*** wp17 No. 5 p. 14 God Called Her "Princess" ***

When one of the angels repeated to Abraham God's promise about Sarah giving birth to a son, she was out of sight, within her tent, listening. The thought of giving birth at her age struck her as being so bizarre that she could not hold back—she laughed to herself, saying: "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I really have this pleasure?" The angel corrected Sarah with the pointed question, "Is anything too extraordinary for Jehovah?" Sarah's reaction was fearful, defensive, and only too human. She blurted out: "I did not laugh!" The angel replied: "Yes! You did laugh."—Genesis 18:9-15.

Was Sarah's laughter evidence that she lacked faith? Not at all. The Bible says: "By faith also Sarah received power to conceive offspring, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful who made the promise." (Hebrews 11:11) Sarah knew Jehovah; she knew that he could fulfill any promise that he made.

(Genesis 19:12-14) 12 Then the men said to Lot: "Do you have anyone else here? Sons-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and all your people in the city, bring out of this place! 13 For we are going to destroy this place, because the outcry against them has indeed grown great before Jehovah, so that Jehovah sent us to destroy the city." 14 So Lot went out and began to speak to his sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters, and he kept saying: "Get up! Get out of this place, because Jehovah will destroy the city!" But to his sons-in-law, he seemed to be joking.

(Genesis 19:17-19) 17 As soon as they had brought them to the outskirts, he said: "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you and do not stand still in any part of the district! Escape to the mountainous region so that you may not be swept away!" 18 Then Lot said to them: "Not there, please, Jehovah! 19 Please, now, your servant has found favor in your eyes and you are showing great kindness to me by preserving me alive, but I am not able to flee to the mountainous region because I am afraid that disaster may overtake me and I will die.

** w19 June pp. 20-21 pars. 3-4 Help Others Deal With Stress ***

3 Lot made a bad decision when he chose to live among the grossly immoral people of Sodom. (Read 2 Peter 2:7, 8.) The region was prosperous, but Lot paid a high price for moving to Sodom. (Gen. 13:8-13; 14:12) His wife apparently became so attached to the city or to some of the people living there that she disobeyed Jehovah. She lost her life when God rained fire and sulfur on the region. And think of Lot's two daughters. They were engaged to men who died in Sodom.

Lot lost his home, his possessions and, most painful of all, his wife. (Gen. 19:12-14, 17, 26) During this stressful period, did Jehovah lose patience with Lot? No.

4 Even though Lot chose to live in Sodom, Jehovah compassionately sent angels to rescue him and his family. However, instead of immediately obeying the angels' urgent command to leave Sodom, Lot "kept lingering." The angels had to seize hold of his hand and help him and his family flee the city. (Gen. 19:15, 16) The angels then told him to run to the mountainous region. But instead of obeying Jehovah, Lot asked to go to a nearby town. (Gen. 19:17-20) Jehovah patiently listened and allowed Lot to go to that town. Lot later became afraid of living there and moved to the mountainous region, the very area Jehovah had told him to go to in the first place. (Gen. 19:30) What remarkable patience Jehovah showed! How can we imitate him?

(Genesis 19:16) 16 When he kept lingering, then because of Jehovah's compassion for him, the men seized hold of his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, and they brought him out and stationed him outside the city.

** w17 September p. 9 par. 4 Imitate Jehovah's Compassion ***

. Think of what God did for Lot. That righteous man was "greatly distressed" by the brazen conduct of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Indeed, God determined that those immoral people deserved to die. (2 Pet. 2:7, 8) God sent angels to rescue Lot. They urged him and his family to flee from the doomed cities. "When he kept lingering, then because of Jehovah's compassion for him, the [angels] seized hold of his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, and they brought him out and stationed him outside the city." (Gen. 19:16) Does that example not indicate that Jehovah is fully aware of the difficult situations in which his faithful people sometimes find themselves?—Isa. 63:7-9; Jas. 5:11, ftn.; 2 Pet. 2:9.