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- Teaching for theological students
- Help to plant new congregations.
- Support for Adventist-Jewish dialogue with scholars and rabbis

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- **Adventist Mission Website:** <http://wjafc.adventistmission.org/> This website is the new resource provided by the Office of Adventist Mission of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists.

- **Russian Website:** <http://www.boruh.info/> This website is in Russian, many articles and the parasha are posted on it every week.

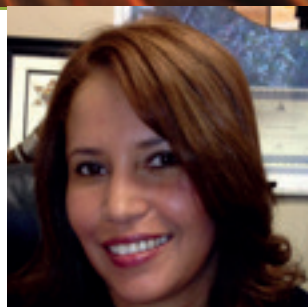


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Shabbat Shalom Newsletter

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Weekly
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of Information

We pray every
week for the
leaders of the
Jewish Ministry
or Jews
somewhere in
the world.

I suggest that
our partners
pray from
November 1
to 7 for Rabbi
Paulo Cardoso,
Leader of
the Jewish
Adventist
ministry In
Florianópolis,
Brazil. Let's
pray for the
success of his
ministries there.



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NEWS

IMMERSION IN CARACAS, VENEZUELA

✳ We have received an encouraging message from Jorge Perez the Jewish leader of our ministry in Caracas, Venezuela: On Shabbat, October 17th our brother Tulio Reyes was baptized in the Adventist congregation of Churuguara, Coro, for our Beth Bnei Zion. Coro is a town that belongs to the Venezuelan Western Union. Tulio is the first member immersed for the Adventist Hebrew Union Ministry.



Tulio was a Messianic Jew, member of the Liderizo Messianic Synagogue in the city of Falcon.

This is the second official immersion of the Hebrew Adventist Ministry in Venezuela after only one year of ministry.

Currently the Adventist Jewish community in Caracas has 14 members and meets

together every week on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

We are developing a Cultural Center called: “Hebrew Adventist Friendship Integral Caracas Complex.” It is a site that will have: an Adventist synagogue, a college, a dining room, a sports court, a theater for concerts, a language school and green recreation areas.

The Almighty continues to use us in order to fulfill our mission to preach the three angels' messages to every nation, kindred, tongue and people in Venezuela.

HEBREW CLASS IN KIEV

✳ Vitaly Obrevko, one of the leaders of the Jewish Adventist congregation in Kiev started a biblical Hebrew class for the members and everyone interested to learn this biblical language. It is already a success. Congratulation to this initiative!



Hubert Paulleta

Parasha Overview:
VAYERA

Three days after performing brit-mila “circumcision” on himself, Abraham is visited by God.

When three angels appear in human form, Abraham rushes to show them hospitality by bringing them into his tent, despite this being the most painful time after the operation.

Sarah laughs when she hears from them that she will bear a son next year.

God reveals to Abraham that He will destroy Sodom, and Abraham pleads for Sodom to be spared.

God agrees that if there are fifty righteous people in Sodom He will not destroy it. Abraham “bargains” God down to ten righteous people. However, not even ten can be found.

Lot, his wife and two daughters are rescued just before sulfur and fire rains down on Sodom and her sister cities. Lot’s wife looks back and is turned into a pillar of salt. Lot’s daughters fear that as a result of the destruction there will be no husbands for them. They decide to get their father drunk and through him to perpetuate the human race. From the elder daughter, Moab is born, and from the younger, Ammon.

Abraham moves to Gerar where Abimelech abducts Sarah. After God appears to Abimelech in a dream, he releases Sarah and appeases Abraham.



G-D COMFORT
ABRAHAM

The parasha starts saying “The L-rd appeared to him near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.” (Gen 18:1) G-d’s presence is everywhere, but not everyone deserves to see Him. The choice is not us, only G-d decides who can see Him and who can receive a revelation from Him.

The name of Abraham does not appear in the first verse of this parasha, it is called “him.” Jewish commentator says that this first verse of the chapter 18 is linked to the last portion of the chapter 17. In that portion, Abraham was circumcised with the members of his household. The pronominal suffix “him” refers back to Abraham of the preceding events. That means we are in the direct continuation of the preceding section. The text wants to say that Abraham was still in pain after his circumcision, he was sitting at the entrance of his tent waiting for a relief of his pain.

Abraham was faithful to the Almighty, whatever

could be G-d’s request, he accepted it. He was 99 years old when he accepted to be circumcised, that is one of G-d’s visit, G-d wanted to comfort him.

At the outset of this revelation, G-d does not inform Abraham of anything. Only later (v. 17) does He prepare to deliver to him a message and reveal to him the decision to destroy Sodom.

INFLUENCE OF A
KIND WORD

The Torah states, “... and he (Avraham) was sitting at the entrance of the tent...” (Gen 18:1) The *Midrash* reveals to us that Avraham wanted to stand up when G-d appeared to him. G-d said to him, “You sit, and I will stand...”

When you go see your bank manager to try and get a loan, you stand and he sits; the one who stands is dependent on the one who sits.

When Avraham wanted to stand, G-d told him to sit. G-d was telling Avraham, I depend on you; everything depends on you, not the other way round.

How can this be? How can G-d depend on any creation? If you look at this world, it

PARASHA FOR
THIS WEEK
Vayera
וַיֵּרָא
Genesis 18: 1 - 22:24

seems that above us is only the sky; you would be hard pressed to see the existence of many worlds above this one. And yet they exist. Millions of worlds, and, of all of them, ours is the lowest. And yet, G-d decided that the whole of creation would be governed by what we do in this lowest of the worlds, down here at the bottom of the pile. When we perform an act of kindness it reverberates all the way to the highest of the highest worlds, and that causes G-d to radiate an influx of blessing back down to this world. In other words, a kind word may stop an earthquake, or a train collision, or a war. (Ohr Somayah).

AN APPARITION
OF G-D

Abraham welcomed the three men who came to him in this way: “If I have found favor in your eyes, my L-rd [ADONAI], do not pass your servant by.” (Genesis 18:3). The word *Adonai* is a very special word which comes from the Hebrew word *Adon* which has the meaning of “master” or “lord,” in modern Hebrew it can be used as “Mister” or “Mr.” This Hebrew word can be used



with possessive declensions to translate personal possessive pronoun as “my” “your” “his” etc... for example *Adoni* means “my lord” and the plural of *Adon* is *Adonim*. Thus *Adon* or *Adonim* could be a general introduction in providing hospitality to the three men who stopped at his tent. But Abraham used the word *Adonai*, which is never used that way. *Adonai* is the holy (*Kadosh*) form of *Adon*, which is only used as G-d’s name. It is the case in this parasha and this interpretation is accepted by the Halacha and Massoret (Jewish application of the law and tradition).

The Torah said to us that G-d appeared to Abraham in order to reveal to him his will: “And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre” (Genesis 18:1). Then it is said how G-d appeared to Abraham, in the form of three men —they were a revelation of G-d— “as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him.” (Genesis 18:1–2). Abraham wanted to fulfill

the mitzva of hospitality and said to them: “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant.” (Genesis 18:3), Even though they were three, he addresses them as they are one, or maybe he noticed that one of them was very special.

After revealing the soon birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah it is written: “When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. Then the L-rd (YHWH) said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?’” (Genesis 18:16–17). It is said “the men” but not how many “men” and at the same time the L-rd started to reveal His intention to Abraham. However the “men” went to Sodom: “The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the L-rd (YHWH)” (Gen 18:22). The beginning of the chapter 19 gives us a new information, it is said “The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city.

“And when morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, ‘Up, take your wife and your two daughters, who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.’” (Genesis 19:15)

When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.” (Genesis 19:1). Three men arrived at the tent of Abraham, but only two “men” left Abraham. The text gives the precision that they were “angels” who were sent by G-d to Sodom. It is not the only time in the Torah that G-d appeared to his servants in the form of “angel”, it is “the” Angel of the L-rd. It is the case in Exodus 3, this apparition of G-d known as the form of a “burning bush.” It is written: “And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush” (Exodus 3:2). It is obvious that this apparition of “the angel of the Lord” to Moses was an apparition of G-d who revealed to Moses his Holy name (YHWH).

THE RIGHTEOUS,
A MINORITY

G-d revealed his plan to Abraham: “How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to

As promised, a son, Itzhak, is born to Sarah and Abraham. On the eighth day after the birth, Abraham circumcises him as commanded

Abraham makes a feast the day Itzhak is weaned.

Sarah tells Abraham to banish Hagar and Hagar’s son Ishmael because she sees in him signs of degeneracy.

Abraham is distressed at the prospect of banishing his son, but God tells him to listen to whatever Sarah tells him to do. After nearly dying of thirst in the desert, Ishmael is rescued by an angel and God promises that he will be the progenitor of a mighty nation. Abimelech enters into an alliance with Abraham when he sees that God is with him. In a tenth and final test, God instructs Abraham to take Itzhak, who is now 37, and to offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham does this, in spite of ostensibly aborting Jewish nationhood and contradicting his life-long preaching against human sacrifice. At the last moment, God sends an angel to stop Abraham.

Because of Abraham’s unquestioning obedience, God promises him that even if the Jewish People sin, they will never be completely dominated by their foes.

The parasha ends with the genealogy and birth of Rivka.

Haftara Overview
2 KINGS 4:1-4:37

This chapter of the second book of Kings tells us about the Ministry of Elisha and Gehazi his servant to an unnamed lady called the Shunammith, that means a native of Shunem, a place belonging to the tribe of Issachar. This place lies in a very rich section of Israel a short distance north of Jezreel at the foot of “Little Hermon.”

The rabbis have read this Haftara in connection with the Parasha Vayera because of their evidence parallel.

Parasha: The angel who visited Abraham said: “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” (Genesis 18:10). It is a promise to Sarah that she will have a son.

Haftara: Elisha plays the role of the angel in this text. He said to the Shunammith: “At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son.” She replied, “No, my lord, O man of God; do not deceive your servant.” The woman conceived and bore a son at that season, in due time, as Elisha had declared to her.” (2Kings 4:16,17)

The next point about this haftara is that this story is special for its



the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know.” (Genesis 18:20–21). But Abraham is a man of love, a very different man than Noah, who received a similar revelation from G-d: “And God said to Noah, ‘I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.’” (Genesis 6:13), this revelation to Noah was much more important than the revelation to Abraham, G-d revealed to Noah that all the human race, all humanity will perish, and Noah accepted it, he did not say anything, he did not try to change the mind of G-d or to save humanity by pleading with G-d. Abraham on the contrary could not accept the destruction of even one city. He knows that this city is corrupted but his trust to G-d and his justice. He knows that G-d cannot punish the innocent with the guilty. Even though complete annihilation is decreed upon Sodom and its sister cities, certainly the innocent people—even one in a million— will be saved that is why he started to speak with G-d about the

righteous living in the cities. “Then Abraham came near and said, ‘Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it?’ ... And the Lord said, ‘If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.’” (Genesis 18:23–26) but Abraham was not satisfied and continues to plead with G-d “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five? And he said, ‘I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.’” (Genesis 18:27-28). G-d answers positively his request. And Abraham continues to “bargain” with G-d to reach the minimum number of 10 righteous, if only the city has 10 righteous the city would be saved. But there was only one, Lot.

Abraham, by G-d’s grace, was granted insight into the ways of Divine providence. Abraham’s descendants, too, were privileged to know and recognize the duty and significance of a minority among

the majority. His descendants were destined to wander as a minority among all the peoples for thousands of years. Even in their own midst all too often the good was embraced only by a minority. G-d’s people or the righteous have always been a minority. Abraham was a minority in Haran, Lot was a minority in Sodom, Israel as a remnant is a minority in the world, and until the end the remnant people of G-d will be a minority in the world.

ABRAHAM TYPE OF
THE MESSIAH

Above all, Abraham is the first of a long line of saviors, his intercession saved Lot and his daughters. Moses saved Israel from Egypt. Many Jewish heroes were servants of the Almighty to saved people of G-d from difficult situations. But the most awaited of all saviors, the one who was typified by all these saviors is Mashiach. The Mashiach is the intercessor by excellence. “because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

“Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.’... Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.” (Genesis 22:1-2, 9)

APOSTOLIC WRITINGS — MARK 10:41-52

The first topic of this parasha is about leadership and humility. Abraham is the chief of his people, however he never uses his position as a leader to impose his view on his followers. When Lot wanted to separate himself from the tribe of Abraham, he accepted and shared his possession with him, when Sarah asked him to send away Agar he accepted even though he was not happy with this request. And in this parasha when he was taking some rest at the shadow of a tree and close to his tent, and saw three travelers coming to him, he forgot his role and leadership and run to meet these people in order to exercise his hospitality. Abraham was full of humility before these people: “When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground.” (Genesis 18:2), this attitude is in contrast with the attitude of some of Yeshua’s disciples who were waiting for the kingdom of G-d and sent a request to the Master: “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” (Mark 10:37), of course the other disciples were not happy, it looked like a conspiracy to take the power from their hands: “And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.” (Mark 10:41). This experience could have been a disaster for the new group of the followers of Yeshua, it could destroy all confidence and trust between this group of friends, but Yeshua knew how to deal with this situation and said to them: “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever

would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42–45). The main rule of leadership among the followers of Yeshua is humility and “servant-leadership.” And Yeshua, the great Master and the Lord gave the first example of this revolutionary concept of “servant-leadership”, if you want to be a good leader in the movement of Yeshua, start to serve. Yeshua was the “Son of Man” introduced by Daniel 7, this Son of Man according to the prophet Daniel is in heaven and is coming from heaven assuming all authority of G-d: “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven ... And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him” (Daniel 7:13–14), this “Son of Man” said Yeshua “came not to be served but to serve” more than that, he did not come only to serve but to die for everyone “to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Yeshua’s talmidim were far away from a good understanding of the kingdom of G-d and its governing rules, they needed to pass through the painful experience of the separation from their Lord, seeing him giving his life for them, and the most crucial experience of receiving the *Ruah Elohim*, or *Ruah Hakodesh*, the Holy Spirit. Yeshua knew it, that is why he said to them in the Besorah of Yochanan: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I

have said to you.” (John 14:26).

This same lesson about leadership is given in the parasha when Abraham met Abimelech. Abimelech, king of Gerar was a dictator who did whatever pleased him, especially with women. Abraham’s wife, Sarah was a beautiful lady, and in spite of her old age Sarah was still a very beautiful and attractive lady. The dictator Abimelech wanted to have intercourse with her. He was not interested in marriage, just pleasure. He took her without Abraham’s permission: “And King Abimelech of Gerar sent and took Sarah” (Genesis 20:2). Women had no freedom at that time. Once again Abraham deals with this situation with great wisdom and humility, he was a real “servant-leader” and let G-d solve his problem: “But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, ‘You are about to die because of the woman whom you have taken; for she is a married woman.’” (Genesis 20:3), and then he respected Abraham and his wife.

The second topic of this besorah is in parallel with the many miracles performed in favor of Abraham. It is the miracles performed by Yeshua. “They came to Jericho. As he and his Talmidim and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus, ... a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ... he says, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ ... Yeshua stood still and said, ‘Call him here.’ ... Then Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man said to him, ‘let me see again.’ ... Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your faith has made you well.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.” (Mark 10:46-52).

length and complexity. Usually the miracle in the Hebrew Bible are short and rare, but this text is an exception. Elisha wants to rewards the Shunammith for her kindness to him and not only did he promise to her that she will have a son, but later when this son died, he raised him.

Parasha: In the parasha we have also a complex text with many miracles, it seems to us that Abraham’s life was a succession of miracles. In Genesis 18 to 22 we see: first miracle: he is practicing on himself circumcision and survived to it. Second miracle: Three angels appeared to Abraham. Third miracle: they announced to Sarah that she will have a boy and that happened the next year. Fourth miracle: G-d announced to Abraham the destruction of Sodom, that happened but Lot and his daughter are miraculously saved. Fifth miracle: God appeared to Abimelech in order to save Sarah from dishonor. Sixth miracle: An Angel saves Hagar and Ishmael from death in the desert. Seventh miracle: God saves Itzhak from being sacrifice by his father by stopping the hand of the killer and providing a ram to be sacrificed instead of the son.

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

REVELATION FROM G-D

And G-d revealed Himself to him [Abraham]. (Gen 18:1) When Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch was a child of four or five, he entered into the room of his grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, and burst into tears. His teacher in cheder (classroom) had taught the verse “**And G-d revealed himself to Abraham.**” Why, wept the child, doesn’t G-d reveal Himself to me?

Rabbi Menachem Mendel replied: “When a Jew, a tzadik, realizes at the age of 99 that he must circumcise himself, that he must continue to perfect himself, he is worthy that G-d should reveal Himself to him.”

Rabbi Hirsch says that in this text it is the first time we see Abraham in his role as a Navi (prophet) for like a Navi he stands here before G-d, who reveals “**his plan to his servants the prophets.**” (Amos 3:7). Only after he fulfilled the mitzvah of the circumcision was Abraham able to be a prophet and to receive the revelation of G-d’s plan. G-d wished to reveal to Abraham the decision to destroy the cities of the plain, the most affluent cities of the land that had been promised as the heritage of the people of Abraham. G-d’s purpose is revealed to Abraham because he is destined to become the ancestor of this people.

BE A GENTLEMAN

A businessman, who only a few years earlier emigrated to America, received a telegram at his office from his son, Yankelle, attending an out-of-town college. Not being very comfortable with reading English, he handed the telegram to his secretary to read it to him. The secretary, who at the moment was not in her best mood, read the telegram in an unpleasant and demanding tone: “Shoes torn. Very cold here. No decent coat. Not enough to eat. Send money!”

When the secretary finished reading the telegram in an unpleasant and demanding voice, the father roared, “Who does he think he is talking to? How dare he address his father so disrespectfully? Not one penny will he get from me. I will teach him manners!”

That night at the dinner table he handed the telegram to his wife, “Read this,” he exclaimed. Could you believe that our own son is so rude?”

Her heart trembling, fearing the worst, the mother picked up the telegram and began reading in a soft motherly voice; “Shoes torn,” she read with a soft sob. “Very cold here. No decent coat,” her tone of voice could have melted a stone. When she came to the words, “Not enough to eat. Send money,” she could actually feel her child starving and she broke down and wept.

“Now, this is different,” said the father, as he reached for his check book, while wiping away a tear. “Now he is asking like a gentleman!”

ALARMING LEVEL OF CRIME

In 1993, in a report entitled, “How We’ve Become Accustomed to Alarming Levels of Crime and Destructive Behavior”, Senator Patrick Daniel Moynihan coined an alliterated term, “Defining Deviancy Down”. It was in response to a sharp increase of violent crimes that were far beyond the so-called “normal culture” of crime. Moynihan argued that American culture and politics, with an increase in deviant behavior, redefines deviance and lowers the “normal” level of deviancy warranted by the increase in such behavior. In layman’s terms, with an increase in violent behavior, some crimes become normal and it is only extraordinary crimes that are of interest to us. When depravity becomes the norm the whole society is destroyed by lowering its standards of morality.

It reminds us of a story where a man broke a rare and expensive dish, he attempted to glue the pieces, but the cracks remained very apparent. So he shipped the repaired dish to China, where they produced an entire set of dishes with the original cracks replicated. Guests marveled at the beautiful pattern - until they were told the truth.

KIDS PARASHA VAYERA

וַיֵּרָא



Genesis 18: 1 - 22:24

“And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.”” (Genesis 18:1–5)

<http://www.bnai-tikkun.org.nz>

Inspirational Corner

❖ Three travelers are passing near [Abraham]. They make no appeal for hospitality, solicit no favor; but Abraham does not permit them to go on their way unrefreshed. He is a man full of years, a man of dignity and wealth, one highly honored, and accustomed to command; yet on seeing these strangers he “ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.” Addressing the leader he said: “My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant” (Genesis 18:2, 3). With his own hands he brought water that they might wash the dust of travel from their feet. He himself selected their food; while they were at rest under the cooling shade, Sarah his wife made ready for their entertainment, and Abraham stood respectfully beside them while they partook of his hospitality. This kindness he showed them simply as wayfarers, passing strangers, who might never come his way again. But, the entertainment over, his guests stood revealed. He had ministered not only to heavenly angels, but to their glorious Commander, his Creator, Redeemer, and King. And to Abraham the counsels of heaven were opened, and he was called “the friend of God.” (CC 50)

Inspirational Corner

❖ We are told that Abraham drew near and said: “Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?” While Abraham had a true sense of humility that every child of God should possess, yet he had an intense interest in the souls of sinners. He is represented as drawing near. He steps close to those heavenly messengers and pleads with them as a child would plead with its parents. He remembers that Lot has made his home in Sodom and that Lot has connections all through Sodom by marriage. (CTr 75)