

The Trinity Delusion

An exposé of the doctrine of the Trinity

Genesis 18-19

Now Yahweh appeared to [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre. And sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day, he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing before him. And when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the ground.

Trinitarian Claims

The Trinitarian claims concerning Genesis 18:1 to 19:29 tend to be a rather confused and muddled affair. Various claims are made by Trinitarians concerning this account.

1. Abraham's three visitors are the three persons of the Trinity.
2. Abraham's three visitors represent the three persons of the Trinity. Or, Abraham's three visitors are not the three persons of the Trinity but are a "type" of the Trinity.
3. Abraham's three visitors are not the three persons of the Trinity but one of the three is the Second Person of the Trinity (Genesis 18:22). This tends to be the most common claim.
4. Yahweh who destroys Sodom is the Second Person of the Trinity (Genesis 19:24).

The Claims vs. The Facts

The Scriptural facts demonstrate these were three angels sent by Yahweh.

The Problems with the Trinitarian Claim(s)

1. Angels/Messengers

The account says three **men** (*enosh*) appeared to Abraham. It then informs us that two of these three men go down to Sodom. When these two men reach Lot's residence, the account explicitly identifies these "men" as angels/messengers (19:1). The three persons/hypostases of Trinitarian doctrine are not angels. It is therefore quite impossible to claim these three men visiting Abraham are the three persons of Trinity doctrine. Moreover, this claim has absurd implications. It would also mean the 3rd person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, ate beef prepared by Abraham and Sarah, and they had indeed seen God when Scripture declares no one ever has seen, or can see, the invisible God (see 1 Timothy 6:16).

2. Eisegesis: Wishful Musings

To declare these three men represent a typology of the Trinity is simply a fabrication originating out of the wishful musings of a Trinitarian mind. In some Trinitarian minds, any time you can count "1,2,3" you get to imagine that you have a representation of the Trinity and since there are three men in this account, [some] Trinitarians simply imagine that the three hypostases of their doctrine are somehow being portrayed in this account. They are simply resorting to the faulty practice of eisegesis and foisting their traditions and imaginations upon the text.

3. Eisegesis: Imagination rather than Hermeneutical Exegesis

Claiming that one of the three visitors is the pre-incarnate Jesus, God the Son, is also resorting to the dubious practice of eisegesis. Jesus is simply imagined to be one of Abraham's three visitors (see 18:22). Or Jesus is simply imagined to be Yahweh who destroyed Sodom (19:24). Either way, they haven't a shred of evidence that a pre-incarnate Son is appearing to Abraham. They simply imagine it up and grant themselves a permit to practice eisegesis by an act of their own will.

For some reason, Trinitarians also seem to think that no one has seen God means no one has seen the Father (or the Spirit?) but men have indeed seen the second person of the Trinity. So they suppose a man can see the first person of the Trinity and live but you can't see the second person of the Trinity and live. How does that make any sense at all? If the first person of the Trinity and the second person of the Trinity are co-equal in every way, this doesn't make any sense whatsoever. In Trinitarianism, both the 1st and 2nd person of the Trinity have the exact same divine nature but you can see one divine person and live but not the other? Strangely, Trinitarians seem blind to their own conundrum.

Even further, what about the third person of the Trinity? Why aren't Trinitarians claiming the third person of the Trinity appeared to Abraham? Because you can't see the invisible Spirit maybe? But the pre-incarnate second person of the Trinity is SPIRIT as well. Does this not occur to them? When we consider such a question, it becomes quite evident what Trinitarians are really doing here. They are simply imagining their personal desires into the text.

4. Absurd Contextual Implications

Additionally, the Trinitarian interpretation necessarily leaves the ancient Israelites in a state of confusion. How was an ancient Israelite expected to come up with the interpretation which Trinitarians are claiming? The ancient Israelites had had no comprehension of a multi-personal God much less a second hypostasis of a Triune God. Were ancient Israelites not expected to comprehend what was happening in this account? How could any ancient Israelite possibly understand this passage if they didn't have any conception of a three-person-God to come up with such an interpretation? The Trinitarian claim leaves us with the ridiculous consequence that ancient Israelites would read this account but couldn't possibly comprehend it at all. Or, the ancient Israelites were expected to understand this account, they did understand this account, and the Trinitarian account is simply rubbish.

5. Three Men

The passage informs us that three "men" (*enosh*) appeared to Abraham (18:2; cf. 18:16,22). Since God is not a man (Numbers 23:19), this may also be the reason that some Trinitarians conveniently prefer to identify these three men as three "visitors." The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was not three men.

The account does not say Abraham saw Yahweh/God and two men. It says three men appeared to him. Hence, we should not suppose that two of the visitors belonged to one category of being but the third visitor belonged to another category. All three visitors are categorized in the same manner: **men**. It is also normal in the Scriptures to identify heavenly angels as "men." It was not normal to describe God as a man.

Hebrews 13:2

Let brotherly love abide. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels/messengers unaware. Hebrews 13:1-2

Abraham was very hospitable to these three visitors (18:4-8). The Hebrews writer may be reminding his Hebrew audience to be hospitable to their Christian by alluding to Abraham's hospitality toward these angels.

6. John 8:56

At John 8:56, Jesus testified, "Abraham rejoiced to see **my day**." The words "my day" refer to Jesus of Nazareth's first century life, a time in the future from Abraham's perspective (see Heb 11:13-16). John is obviously alluding to Abraham seeing Jesus, his promised seed, as a future reality through whom all the nations of earth would be blessed according to God's promise. This doesn't fit the Trinitarian claim that Abraham had been visited by Jesus as one of these three visitors.

7. Hebrews 1:1-2 - The Scriptures declare it couldn't be the Son

At Hebrews 1:1-2, we are told that God had spoken to His people through the prophets in the days of old but in these last days God speaks to His people in a Son.

God spoke to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways in the days of old but **in these last days** He has spoken to us in a son.

This statement wouldn't have a point or make any sense if God had indeed been speaking to His people **in a Son** in these ancient times and long before the first century's "these last days" which the Hebrews writer is describing. But the plain meaning of Hebrews 1:1-2 is that something had changed with the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the days of old, God spoke to His people through the prophets but in these last days God speaks to His people in a son. The obvious implication here is that God did not speak to His people in a son in the days of old. We cannot claim the son was communicating with anyone in the Old Testament times without contradicting Hebrews 1:1-2. Hence, it should be quite clear to every reasonable person that Hebrews 1:1-2 rules out any possibility of the son speaking to Abraham at Genesis 18.

8. The Grammar

In verse 18:2, Abraham bows down to the ground before these three men and then in verse 3, he addresses them in the singular as "my Lord" (*adoni*). In verses 4-5, he continues to speak to them but now addressing them in the plural ("you"). Verse 19:18 is very telling in this respect. Here we read, "Lot said to THEM, "Please no my Lord" addressing the two angels with the divine name *Adonai*. This shows us beyond any doubt that we are not to suppose that Abraham or Lot were singling out one of the three angels and speaking to them. It says Lot said to THEM. The Hebrew verbs used at 19:18 are singular demonstrating that Lot is speaking to God through these angels, Yahweh's messengers through whom He communicates with men. The Trinitarian claim necessarily disregards these facts. Since angels are messengers of Yahweh, and speak on Yahweh's behalf, it is not unusual for anyone to speak to the angels as if they are speaking to the One who had sent them.

9. The Sopherim Alterations

The Sopherim altered the divine name YHWH to *Adonai* in 134 places in the Old Testament Scriptures and kept a record of these alterations. This is not to be confused with the Jewish practice of saying *Adonai* when the divine name appeared in the Scriptures. These were actual alterations. It just so happens that five of these alterations are in this account (Genesis 18:3,27,30,32; 19:18). The Sopherim also altered 18 verses commonly known as "emendations." One of these emendations was Genesis 18:22 which was changed from "Yahweh stood yet before Abraham" to "Abraham stood yet before Yahweh."

Analysis of the Facts

Where do the grammatical and contextual facts lead us? When we honestly appreciate the contextual facts provided to us, we also find that these facts lead to an entirely different conclusion than the claims of Trinitarians. These facts decisively tell us three representatives of Yahweh appeared to Abraham: three angels.

1. Three Men

Abraham saw three "men" (18:2,16,22). The Hebrew word translated as "men" is *enosh*. It is the same word used to refer to the men of Sodom in the next chapter (19:4,11). This Hebrew noun is derived from the corresponding Hebrew verb, *anash*, to be sick, weak, frail.

It is not unusual for the Scriptures to depict angels as men. Verses 18:22 and 19:1 explicitly identify two of these men as angels to whom Lot bowed down to the ground just as Abraham had done in the previous chapter. The account in chapter 19 then subsequently refers to these two angels as "men" (19:5,8,10,12,16; *enosh*) just as we find in Genesis 18.

Since the three visitors are categorically identified as three "men," we should be first inclined to conclude that if two of these three men are angels, then all three of these men are angels.

2. Shaliach: Yahweh's Messengers as His Representatives

The word "angel" is not really a translation of the Hebrew word in question. Rather, the word "angel" is an anglicized version of the Greek and Latin terms for a messenger (*aggelos*, *angelus*). The Hebrew word commonly rendered as "angel" in English Bibles literally means "messenger." If this word was actually translated, our Bibles would say "messenger" rather than "angel." The very same word is also used to identify human messengers.

An "angel of the LORD," or "angel of Yahweh," means "Yahweh's messenger." Angels are Yahweh's messengers. The purpose of Yahweh's messengers is to deliver Yahweh's messages, Yahweh's words. Because these messengers are sent by Yahweh, they are regarded by men as Yahweh Himself because that messenger is representing Yahweh Himself having been sent by Yahweh Himself on His behalf. These messengers are Yahweh's representatives since they speak Yahweh's messages on His behalf. For example, to dishonor a messenger whom Yahweh has sent is to dishonor Yahweh Himself because Yahweh had sent this messenger as His representative. To disrespect Yahweh's emissary is to ultimately disrespect the One who sent that envoy: Yahweh. So when an angel speaks to a human being in the Old Testament, he is regarded as if it is Yahweh Himself speaking and that is because Yahweh Himself IS in fact speaking. He is speaking through an intermediary, through one of His messengers as His representative. This principle of agency (*shaliach*) is very common in the Scriptures especially with respect to Yahweh's messengers/angels.

Now a **messenger of Yahweh** found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." Then **the messenger/angel of Yahweh** said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority." Moreover, **the messenger of Yahweh** said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count." **The messenger of Yahweh** said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because Yahweh has given heed to your affliction. "He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers." **Then she called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?"** (Genesis 16:7-13).

A messenger of Yahweh appeared to Moses in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush. And he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." **When Yahweh saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!"** And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said also, **"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."** Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Yahweh said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt.... God said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:1-14).

Now when forty years had passed, **an angel** appeared to Moses in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. (Acts 7:30).

Note how Stephen makes it clear that it was an angel who had appeared to Moses. But when we read the account in Exodus, it sounds like God Himself appeared to Moses and Moses is speaking directly to God Himself. But again, we are to understand that God is communicating to Moses through an intermediary, His messenger. And we are even explicitly told this is Yahweh's messenger, His angel, and this is verified by Stephen at Acts 7:30.

It is also important to understand and honestly regard the obvious. It does not make any sense to suggest Yahweh's messenger is Yahweh Himself. There would be no need to identify Yahweh as Yahweh's messenger. Why would anyone ever want to identify Yahweh Himself as Yahweh's messenger? It is a senseless proposition. Similarly, we would not suppose David's messenger is David himself. However, as an agent of Yahweh, angels/messengers are to be as regarded as if Yahweh Himself has arrived because that messenger/angel is representing Yahweh Himself and Yahweh is speaking His own words through His intermediary, His messenger. So when we read that Yahweh appeared to Abraham, and then read that it is three angels appearing to Abraham, we are simply reading what occurs in several other places of Scripture.

4. Genesis 18:20-22 & Basic Reading Comprehension

At verse 18:22, we read that two of the three men depart and go to Sodom. We also read that Abraham is left standing before Yahweh. And so Trinitarians naively suppose that one of the three men is Yahweh but the other two men are angels. However, the contextual facts refute this claim.

At verse 18:20, Yahweh says He will "go down" to Sodom to check out the situation. But if Yahweh had already descended to earth and stood before Abraham, as Trinitarians are claiming, it certainly would not make any sense to interpret Yahweh to be saying He will descend from heaven to earth since He is already there. Hence, the words "go down" are referring to a topographical descent from Abraham's place down to Sodom.

Sodom was geographically located near the Dead Sea, the lowest point on the surface of the earth. To travel to Sodom, you must go down to Sodom. But relative elevation differences are not even required to make statements like this in the Scriptures. It is normal language in Scripture to say a man "went down" to another place. For example, the same Hebrew word is used in the following passages of Scripture:

Abraham went down to Egypt (Genesis 12:10)
 Do not go down to Egypt (Genesis 26:2)
 Ismaelites on their way down to Egypt (Genesis 27:25)
 Joseph was brought down to Egypt (Genesis 39:1)
 Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt (Genesis 42:3)

The critical point here is that Yahweh declares He will go down to Sodom. But notice carefully what happens. It is the two angels who go down to Sodom.

Then the men rose up from there, and **looked down toward Sodom...**
 Then Yahweh said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that **I will go down** and see if what they have done is as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." **The men turned away and went toward Sodom**, but Abraham remained standing before Yahweh.... The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening...
 Genesis 18:16-19:1.

Beginning at verse 16, we read that the three men arose and looked toward Sodom. Then Yahweh said **He** will go to Sodom. Then two of the men go to Sodom. Trinitarians seem to have some difficulty with reading comprehension at this point. The context tells us that **Yahweh's going down to Sodom occurs when the two angels go down to Sodom.**

Here we discover what is really happening. How does Yahweh go down to Sodom? The two angels go down to Sodom. How does Yahweh remain standing before Abraham? One of the angels does not go down to Sodom but remains standing before Abraham. Yahweh's appearance to Abraham is all three of these men:

Three Men	Yahweh	The Men
Two of the Three Men	<u>Yahweh</u> goes down to Sodom 18:20-21	= <u>Two</u> of the three men go down to Sodom 18:22
One of the Three Men	<u>Yahweh</u> remains with Abraham 18:22	= <u>One</u> of the three men remain with Abraham 18:22
Three Men 18:2	Yahweh appears to Abraham 18:1	= THREE

Three Angels - Genesis 19:1

Let the reader clearly understand this critical point. We are told that only two of these men go to Sodom and they are identified as two angels. But when we are told Yahweh remained with Abraham, we are expected to suppose one of these three men wasn't really an angel but the second person of the Trinity. Why? Because it says Yahweh remained behind with Abraham? Why then don't Trinitarians consistently interpret verse 20 in this way where it says will go down to Sodom? If Trinitarians were consistent, they would see that one of the three remained behind and in this way, Yahweh remained behind with Abraham, and if two of the three went to Sodom, this is now Yahweh went down to Sodom.

The Final Nail in the Trinitarian Coffin

Notice that Yahweh says He will go down to Sodom. And then the two angels go down to Sodom. This is obviously how it happened. But in the strange mindset of Trinitarians, Yahweh says He will go down to Sodom but doesn't bother. Rather, the two angels go down to Sodom and Yahweh remains standing before Abraham. This doesn't even make any sense but this absurd interpretation is required for them to make their claims.

5. Who will destroy Sodom?

Another contextual fact confirms this point. Beginning at verse 19:1, we find the two angels have arrived at Lot's residence in Sodom. The angels then warn Lot that Yahweh has sent **them** to destroy Sodom. But notice how Lot responds:

Now **the two angels** came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom....they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them.... Then the two men said to Lot, "Whom else have you here?".... for **we are about to destroy this place**, because their outcry has become so great before Yahweh that **Yahweh has sent us to destroy it.**" Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get out of this place, for **Yahweh will destroy the city.**".... Then Yahweh rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh out of heaven (Genesis 19:12-14).

Notice what happens. These two angels inform Lot that they will destroy Sodom because Yahweh has sent them to destroy it. Now observe that Lot understood them. He understood the angels to mean **Yahweh** will destroy the city. So when we finally read that Yahweh rained brimstone and fire upon Sodom, it is clear that this means these two angels rained down destruction upon Sodom from Yahweh Himself out of heaven.

Conclusion

Rather than an honest examination of the facts, the Trinitarian claim is the product of their own personal desire to have their own theological imaginations satisfied. Fourth century philosophy is read into the text to tickle their itching ears despite the unlikely proposition that no ancient Israelite could have possibly interpreted this account as they do.

The three men who came to Abraham were Yahweh's three messengers. Yahweh communicates through His messengers and He communicated to Abraham through these messengers. For that reason, both Abraham and Lot bow down before them and addresses them with the singular term, "my Lord." The text shows us that Yahweh went down to Sodom and we see it was the two angels who went down to Sodom. When Lot hears that these two angels declare will destroy Sodom, he understands this to mean Yahweh will destroy Sodom. And when these two angels destroyed Sodom, it is described as Yahweh raining down brimstone and fire upon Sodom from Yahweh out of heaven. The principle of agency (*shaliach*) is a common concept in Scripture. Agents are sent on behalf of the Sender to speak His words and do His work. Because His agents are sent on His behalf, that is, in His name, one is expected to respond to these agents as of one is responding to the Sender Himself. Lot addressed two of these angels as "Lord" (singular). All these facts decisively demonstrate that the three men who appeared to Abraham were three angels. They are identified as Yahweh since they are Yahweh's representatives, and as representatives of Yahweh, they are understood as representations of Yahweh. After all, the text tells us that Yahweh Himself had remained on His throne in heaven. Now who would that be?

The most important feature of the facts here is that the two angels who go to Sodom are described as Yahweh going to Sodom. That being understood, it is then easy to comprehend how the third angel is described as Yahweh remaining with Abraham. This fact is further emphasized at 19:18 where Lot address them in the singular and how the context shows that "Yahweh rained down" in verse 24 refers to the angels destroying Sodom.

And **Yahweh** said, "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. **I will go** down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me and if not, I will know. Then **the men** turned away from there and **went toward Sodom**, while Abraham was still standing before **Yahweh**."

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Abraham's Three Visitors - Who were they?



HOME