

Rashi on Genesis 19:1

ANGELS — But elsewhere (Genesis 18:2) Scripture calls them men! When the Divine Presence was with them, it speaks of them as men. Another explanation is: in connection with Abraham whose power to receive heavenly visitors was great and whom angels visited as regularly as men, it calls them men, but in connection with Lot it calls them angels (Genesis Rabbah 50:2).

Rashi on Genesis 18:2

AND HE SAW — What does the repetition of this word וירא imply? The first time it has its ordinary meaning (“he looked”), the second that of understanding: he saw that they were standing in one spot, and so understood that they had no desire to cause him any trouble. Although they knew that he would go to meet them they nevertheless remained where they were out of respect to him and to show him that they wished to spare him trouble; he, therefore, took the initiative and ran towards them.

Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer 26:1

The second trial was when he was put into prison for ten years—three years in Kuthi, seven years in Budri. After ten years they sent and brought him forth and cast him into the furnace of fire, and the King of Glory put forth His right hand and delivered him from the furnace of fire, as it is said, "And he said to him, I am the Lord who brought thee out of the furnace of the Chaldees" (Gen. 15:7). Another verse (says), "Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of the furnace of the Chaldees" (Neh. 9:7).

Rashi on Genesis 19:17

LOOK NOT BEHIND THEE — You sinned with them but art saved through the merit of Abraham. It is not fitting that you should witness their doom whilst you yourself are escaping (Genesis Rabbah 50:11).

Rashbam on Genesis 19:17

First of all on account of their going to experience the anguish of seeing the destruction of their city; secondly, in order not to afford them an opportunity to see the angels performing their destructive work as angels when there was no need for them to witness this. Watching divine beings in action and being saved by such spectacles requires Divine intervention and should therefore be avoided.

Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer 25:11

And they said to them: Do not look behind you, for verily the Shekhinah of the Holy One, blessed be He, has descended in order to rain upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire. The pity of 'Edith the wife of Lot was stirred for her daughters, who were married in Sodom, and she looked back behind her to see if they were coming after her or not. And she saw behind the Shekhinah, and she became a pillar of salt, as it is said, "And his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt" (Gen. 19:26).

Rashi on Genesis 19:26

AND SHE BECAME A PILLAR OF SALT — By salt had she sinned and by salt was she

punished. He (Lot) said to her once: “Give a little salt to these strangers” and she answered him, “Do you mean to introduce this bad custom, also, into our city?” (Genesis Rabbah 50:4).

Rabbeinu Bachya on Genesis 19:26

”his wife looked behind him and was turned into a pillar of salt.” It is possible to understand the word “behind him” as referring to the angel who overturned these towns, seeing the angel has already been credited with this activity in verse 25 where the Torah mentioned sulfur and fire being rained on the towns. The reason Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt may have had to do with the power of the fire [which dehydrated all fluids and left only solids which endure like salt? Ed.] When we find Moses refer to this event in Deut. 29,22 where he credits “G’d” with having turned that area into uninhabitable sulfur and salt, something completely burned, he refers to the agent of G’d who performed this as אפו והמתו. The fact that he first mentioned “G’d,” and then “אפי” and “המה,” indicates that these were the names of the respective angels who had carried out this destruction.