

Genesis 18
The Greeting of God
and the
Sin of Sodom

I. Seeing

- A. ***18:1 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. 2 He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, 3 and said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, 5 while I fetch 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."***
- B. This passage is fascinating. The Lord appears to Abraham as three men. Abraham sometimes speaks to them in the singular (My Lord...your sight) sometimes in the plural (yourselves). There is a clear reference to the Trinity here.
- C. Some however declare that this is really God and two angels. Later two of the three leave and Abraham still talks with God: ***22 So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.*** Later too at the opening of 19 we read that the two "men" go forth to carry out the inquiry over the city: *19:1 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening; and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed himself with his face to the earth,* However, these later distinctions do not prove these were merely angels. It could be that the Son, and the Holy Spirit go forth to accomplish the will of the Father. This would be in accord with scripture which declares: *John 5:22 The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.* Hence the Son goes forth to make the judgement on Sodom and the Holy Spirit, which is symbolized by fire (*cf* Acts 2:3) carries it out and fire and brimstone (molten rock) rain down.
- D. Abraham's bowing may be an act of worship but some scholars dismiss this and simply see it as a common act of oriental hospitality. They declare that it was appropriate for a Hebrew to greet a visitor in this way and call him "my lord" This may true only if Abraham does not know who this is yet. His of himself as their servant suggest that Abraham did have some idea and thus his act is more than hospitable.
- E. God, though portrayed as three men, is portrayed in very anthropomorphic terms. Abraham suggests he wash his feet and rest under a tree and eat a meal.

II. Sacrifice

A. **6 And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. 8 Then he took curds, and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.**

B. Worship and sacrifice are meant to be together. In the Old Testament worship of God is never without sacrifice.

III. Swearing -

A. **9 They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." 10 The LORD said, "I will surely return to you in the spring, and Sarah your wife shall have a son."**

B. God renews his promise to Abraham that he will have a son. By now this promise may seem old. He has heard it before. But now God puts a time frame on the promise!

C. It is interesting that Abraham's reaction is not recorded. The focus will shift to Sarah.

IV. Sarah -

A. **And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" 13 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, in the spring, and Sarah shall have a son." 15 But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."**

B. Recall that Abraham had laughed in the last Chapter when God told him of a son:

1. Gen 17:17 *Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"*

C. Now it is Sarah who Laughs.

D. It is perhaps no coincidence that their child is named Isaac, a name which means, "he (or she) laughs."

E. Consider the basic flow of this passage:

1. Listening - v. 10
2. Likelihood - v. 11
3. Laughing - v. 12
4. Lesson - vv. 13-14
5. Lying - vv. 15

F. Despite all this, God is patient and seems determined to grant this gift despite

their faltering faith. He seems here to do it more for his glory and for his namesake.

V. Showing

A. ***16 Then the men set out from there, and they looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to set them on their way. 17 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by him? 19 No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."***

B. Why tell Abraham? God sees it as important that Abraham know for two reasons:

1. Since Abraham will be the leader of a great nation that is blessed. What is one of the chief blessings of this nation? That they know the will of God:
 - a. *Blessed are we, O Israel; for what pleases God is known to us!*
Baruch 4:4
 - b. Further, verse 19 sees that Abraham will admonish his children based on this event. The New Testament makes this point:
 - (1) *2 Peter 2:6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction and made them an example to those who were to be ungodly*

C. The Bible also gives another answer to this question, "Why Tell Abraham?"

1. *Amos 3:6 Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does evil befall a city, unless the LORD has done it? Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.*

VI. Sodom

A. ***20 Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know."***

B. What was the sin of Sodom?

1. *Ezekiel 16:49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.*
2. Sins were:
 - a. Pride -
 - b. Gluttony - fulness of bread
 - c. Idleness

- d. Injustice toward the poor - not strengthen the poor and needy
- e. Sexual Perversion (and proud of it) - abomination
 - (1) Lev 20:13 *If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them.*

VII. Supplication

- A. **22 So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. 23 Then Abraham drew near, and said, "Wilt thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou then destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? 25 Far be it from thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" 26 And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." 27 Abraham answered, "Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. 28 Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Wilt thou destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." 29 Again he spoke to him, and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." 30 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." 31 He said, "Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." 32 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." 33 And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.**
- B. Here is an important passage on intercessory prayer. Lot as a carnal man has stopped praying and pitched his tent among the wicked. But Abraham still prays for him and his prayer will spare Lot.
- C. We need to pray to spare this hell bound sin-soaked world. There is an important passage from Ezekiel that reminds us of the need to pray:
 - 1. Ez 22:29 *The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery; they have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without redress. And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their way have I requited upon their heads, says the Lord GOD."*
- D. Another New Testament text exhorts us to pray:
 - 1. 1 Tim 2:2:1 *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the*

sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- E. Abraham's prayer is
1. Courageous -
 - a. **22 but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.**
 2. Contrite -
 - a. **27 Abraham answered, "Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.**
 3. Confident -
 - a. **25 Far be that from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**
 4. Compassionate -
 - a. he is praying on behalf of others asking nothing for himself
 5. Continuing -
 - a. Again and again he asks: 50, 45, 40, 30, 20, 10
 6. Conquering -
 - a. Gen 19:29 **So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.**