

# A FRIEND OF GOD | GENESIS 18:1-33 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 8/20/2023

I. \* God Appears (1-8) | II. God Announces (9-15) | III. God Alerts (16-21) | God Allows (21-33)

**INTRO:** As we have studied the life of Abraham, we've learned that his **Faith and Trust** in God had grown into **Love and Dependency** on God (**Gen 12:1, 4; 15:6**). This next chapter reveals something special about their relationship. Abraham became more than just close to God! In fact, (**Isaiah 41:8**), tells us that **God refers to Abraham as, "My FRIEND!"** – **A Friendship is a mutually beneficial relationship between two individuals who have a link of affection in common.**

- **How does one become a friend of God?** James makes it clear, **"Abraham believed God... it was accounted to him for righteousness."** And he was called the friend of God. (**James 2:23**).

There are **\*4 sections** in this chapter showing how God and Abraham INTERACT as FRIENDS.

**I. GOD APPEARS (1-8) – He unexpectedly visits His Friend.** It's not clear how much time has passed, but (**v.10**) suggests at least 3 months since the last visit.

**A. Abraham Saw (1-3a) ...Three Men!** This is another remarkable theophany. The **pre-incarnate Jesus** appears with 2 of his Angels (**18:1, 22; 19:1**). – At first, it seems that Abe failed to identify the chief Angel as YAHWEH, but soon recognized Him in human form, calling Him **"My Lord"** i.e., *Adonai*. – As his Lord arrived, notice Abraham's Attentiveness. **He bowed (Shachah)** and referred to himself as His servant!

**B. Abraham Solicits (3b-5) ...His Company,** so that he could **show hospitality to them**. – His focus was to **"Refresh their Hearts,"** providing Water for Washing their Feet as they Waited in the Shade, so that he could offer a **"mere morsel"** of bread. (*Stay w/me Lord!*)

- **P/A – Hospitality Brings Refreshment** to our physical needs, and often opens the door to allow spiritual refreshment! (**Rom 15:32; 1 Cor 16:18; Philemon 1:7,20**) – **Hospitality is Rooted in Love (tt. Rom 12:9-13).**
- **Their Response (5b), "Do as you have said."** – *A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men* (**Prov 18:16**)

**C. Abraham Serves (6-8) – Friendship involves ministry!** He did everything in his power to **Serve with Excellence!** Notice his Actions, they were done **Speedily**. Notice his Provisions, **Abundantly...** fine meal for cakes, a young calf, butter and milk! This was **NOT a FIELD PICNIC...** this was a **FEAST for his LORD!** – When we serve, **do we first serve the best to our Lord,** or **do we leave Him the Leftovers...** of our Time and Efforts, of our Offerings and Worship? (*cf. Malachi 1:8; 3:8-12*)

- **Abraham also Served them PERSONALLY (8b)!** – He did not have any of his many servants attend to their needs...He did it Himself!

**CLOSING THOUGHT: A FRIEND OF GOD** will Interact with the Lord in the same way as Abraham? (**Col 3:23-24**) *And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,* <sup>24</sup> *knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ!*

**II. GOD ANNOUNCES (9-15) ...*The Time for Sarah!*** As Abraham stood there under the Tree, I believe that he also waited EXPECTANTLY, for any news or update on the REPORT he received just 3 months earlier (17:16,19) re: **Sarah's conceiving**. The Lord knew this, & began...

**A. His Inquiry (9-10a)** – The first part of the mission was to update His Friend about **His promise** to him and his wife Sarah, so **THEY** asked *where she was?* – She was actually in the same tent, separated by a large flap. **Present, but not visibly present!** – Then, the Lord continued, *"I will certainly return to you, according to the time of life,"* which is best understood as **9-months, the time** until birth. – **His Intel: It was time** for SARAH, to have a son! (*I love that the word **Certainly** was used, because it signifies a Sure Promise! (cf. Rom 9:9)*)

**B. His Insight (10b-12)** – Moses writes to help us understand the circumstances: Sarah was Listening intently (obviously!) – The **Age-factor** of Abraham and Sarah. – And in particular the **Deadness of Sarah womb!** – Ah, but (v.12) **reveals a very different kind of problem with Sarah! INCREDULOUS DISBELIEF!** (*i.e., unwilling, or unable to believe or trust something!*)

- Perhaps Abraham told her of God's promise (17:19), that she would have a child? Perhaps He mentioned that God was the Almighty God (17:1), who could do anything? **But she could not wrap her mind around who this God was. WHY? B/C Sarah reasoned within herself,** limiting her trust in God to do the miraculous!

**C. His Insistence (13-15)** – The **'Lord Heard'** the wrangling of Sarah's heart (13a). This reveals His **OMNISCIENCE, an attribute of God alone!** It's defined as **OMNISCIENCE = the state of having total knowledge, the quality of Knowing Everything.** – **God has to be All-Knowing** to be sovereign over His creation of all things, whether visible or invisible.

- The Lord insistently asked Abraham **WHY Sarah Laughed in unbelief? (13b-14)** And WHY she doubted His **OMNIPOTENCE**, stating **"IS ANYTHING TO HARD FOR THE LORD?"** – *Though rhetorical, it can be answered with (Matt 19:26), "...with God all things are possible."* H. Morris comments, *"He who created all things surely controls all things, and he who enacted the laws of nature can change them if He wills."*

- Though Sarah laughed, the Lord insistently to declared His return at **the Appointed Time**, when all would come to pass.

- **Sarah Insistently Denied it (15)** – Picture this scene! **Sara quickly realized that she misjudged God's omniscience, when He answered her thoughts** from the other room, insistently saying **"NO, but you did laugh!"** – Unbelief in Not a Laughing matter!

**P/A – Do we LAUGH at the possibilities of God, because of our human limitations?** Honestly, is a child from a dead womb too difficult for the One who called all things into existence? – **A FRIEND OF GOD believes God for the impossible to be done!** (James 2:23) *And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.*

**III. GOD ALERTS (16-21) ...Abraham** of the other reasons for His visitation. As the Angels moved toward their assignment to assess Sodom (16-17), the Lord did not want to hide it from his friend, so He provided information about...

**A. His Intentions for Abraham (18-19)** – The Lord had a divine confidence in what Abraham would become... a great nation of which all nations would be blessed in Him, as promised (12:3). – He knew that Abraham would walk in the ways of the Lord (19). – The words “I know him” means, *“I have chosen him, and he is My intimate friend.”*

- This account was probably what Jesus referred to when He said, *“Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”* (John 8:56).
- Like Abraham, a Friend of God will delight in *Keeping the Way of the Lord, Walking in Righteousness and Justice*. – Moses later reminded Abraham’s descendants that this was to be done with diligence (tt. Deut 4:6-9). – *Adhering to Righteousness* was the other reason for the Lord’s visit. The Lord now reveals...

**B. His Intentions for Sodom and Gomorrah (20-21)** – As the Lord heard *the Outcry of their Sin* (Cf. Prov 15:3), and He demonstrates *His own personal involvement* to investigate the report, to determine the level of depravity before acting in judgment!

P/A – A Friend of God receives intimate details about God’s plans! (cf. John 15:15)

**IV. GOD ALLOWS (22-33) ...Abraham to Intercede (22-23a)**. – In the first part of this chapter, we see *Abraham Running to Serve!* Now he is *Standing to Intercede for others*. – Abraham’s great character is revealed by his Heart for Intercession! This places him in a category with Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Jeremiah, the apostles and even Jesus Christ! – An Intercessor is a *Consecrated believer who is Close to God and Shares God’s secrets!* One who stands in the gap on behalf of others in accordance with God’s will! (Cf. Ezek 22:30-31).

**A. Questioning Righteous Judgment (23b-25, 27-28a, 29a, 30a, 31a, 32a)** – Abraham’s *concern was for the people*, but *his stance* was based on the righteous character and loving kindness of God, as he declared, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”

- Abraham then pleads with God (24-32) *...for as few as 50...45...40...30...20*, or even 10 righteous people there. He was not trying to talk God into something against His will but expected God to protect innocent people...he did not want to see the righteous perish!
- He goes on to say, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (25) – This is the whole premise for his argument! – *Would God sweep away the righteous with the unrighteous?* It would be Unrighteous, Unjust, and Unfair for God to do so, and every human being would agree. – This is one of the reasons why I do not hold a **post-tribulation view** (i.e., *The church being present on earth when God’s judgment & wrath is poured out*) **God is Not Unjust!**
  - And so, the **FRIEND OF GOD** was convinced there were some righteous people in Sodom, so he appealed for Sodom on the basis of God’s justice, which teaches us how

to intercede. – Intercessors must have **COMPASSIONATE** hearts and a deep concern for the **SALVATION** of the lost, no matter what their sins may be. (*Do you weep for the lost?*)

**B. Affirming Righteous Judgment (26, 28b, 29b, 30b, 31b, 31b)** – These verse teaches us that **God is patient and willing to hear our petitions. He always responds with justice! – If in this whole city there were fifty righteous people, he declares **the hand of judgment will be withheld!** And (Gen 19:16) informs us that **God did not stop at 10...He went all the way down to 4!** – This is because He does not delight in judgment... **God delights in mercy!****

- God is “...not willing that any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9)
- God “...will have all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4)
- God has “...no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ezek. 33:11).

**C. Concluding Righteous Judgment (33)** – God answered the Concerns of his Friend Abraham, and the matter was settled! – **But we can rest assured that True and Righteous are His judgments...** (Rev 19:2) – **A friend of God will understand that God is just and rests on God’s sovereignty in all matters.**

**God Desires a Relationship with us... Are you A Friend of GOD?**

A Friend of God, Serves God, Believes God, Hears from God and Prays to God.