

“Abraham Intercedes for Sodom”

Genesis 18:1-33

For the week of February 28, 2021

The Main Point

We can trust God, no matter how impossible the situation, because God always keeps His promises. God often reminds us of His power when we are powerless. Financial, emotional, and spiritual issues can cloud our faith as well as our family's. During these moments of doubt, God can and does remind us of His power through His means. Read 1 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 2:9; and Romans 8:34. How do these verses let us know God will be faithful to fulfill His promises?

Can it be difficult to trust God's plan when you don't know the details? Why or why not?

A Meal with the Lord and Two Angels

Read Genesis 18:1-8. Why did Abraham pull out all the stops to serve the three visitors? Did he realize who was visiting him? If so, how?

Verse 1 states matter-of-factly that “the Lord appeared” to Abraham. Often, the Lord will appear without announcement – and in many ways. How has the Lord appeared to you? Through the Word, through creation, through the quiet, or something else? Share in your community group.

Theophany

This passage gives an occurrence of a theophany. *Theophany* is formed from the Greek noun for God (*theos*) and the Greek verb “to appear” or “manifest” (*phaneo*). A theophany is a temporary, visible appearance or manifestation of God. It is a form of revelation in which God makes His presence known to people in a human form. A theophany is distinguished from the permanent revelation of God in Jesus Christ, which is called the incarnation.

Sarah Laughs

Read Genesis 18:9-15. The Lord had already told Abraham that Sarah would have a son “by this time next year” (read Genesis 17:15-21). What was the purpose of returning to repeat the announcement in this passage?

Why did the Lord rebuke Sarah's laughter (Genesis 18:12-14) but not Abraham's (Genesis 17:17-22)? What was different in each person's laugh?

Now read Hebrews 11:11. How should we understand Sarah's laughter considering her faith?

The Messiah Promised

Isaac is not the only child whose birth was promised in Scripture. Throughout the Old Testament we read God's promises to the people of Israel that He would send the Messiah to save and lead His people. Hundred of years pass and then an angel appears to Mary, and God revealed that He keeps His promises. Read Luke 1:26-38. What qualities of God's character are on display in His choice of Mary?

Read Luke 1:34 again. How does Mary's reaction to the angel's news compare with Sarah's reaction in Genesis 18:12-15? What is the “takeaway” from these two responses?

Sodom and Gomorrah

Previously, Sodom and Gomorrah were mentioned in Genesis 14. There Abram rescued not only his nephew Lot but the entire people of these cities from a group of foreign invaders. Unfortunately, Sodom and Gomorrah were not good cities in the eyes of the Lord. He has plans for them, which is revealed to Abraham before they are implemented.

Read Genesis 18:16-33. What is the argument Abraham gives to God? Why did Abraham stop at 10 and not go down to 1 or was it God who stopped the count? Did Abraham change God's mind in this interaction or did God change Abraham's mind?

What does this interaction reveal about Abraham's character? What does it reveal about God's character? How have you experienced God's character in your life (such as mercy or grace or patience)?

What details give us an idea about how immersed Lot and his family were into the culture of Sodom and Gomorrah? Read the description of Lot in 2 Peter 2:7-8. How does this description help us to better understand Lot's situation?

The Final "Takeaway"

Let's move forward to 2021: How should a "righteous" person today engage and live in this wicked and sinful world? What are the pitfalls and how can a person avoid them? End your discussion with a time of prayer for strength in living in today's world.