

Abraham Pt 3

Or Where the Lot Falls

Genesis 17-19

Intro:

Abraham is mentioned 154 times in the book of Genesis and 261 times in the Bible. 68 of those times are in the New Testament.

Abraham is referred to as:

The Father of the nation of Israel and **the father of all who believe**

And God is often distinguished from false gods as **the God of Abraham**

Abraham is revered by the Christians, Jews and Muslims which combine to make up almost 4 billion of the world's 7 billion inhabitants

Abraham's story is recorded in Genesis 11 – 25. These 15 chapters follow Abraham through a series of events as God begins to work out the promises first given to him.

His story is covered in a series of at least 16 vignettes

- His calling
- His journey to Canaan
- Fleeing to Egypt
- Rescuing Lot
- His dark dream
- His encounter with Hagar
- Sign of circumcision
- Sarah's laughter
- Destruction of Sodom
- Journey Back to Egypt
- The birth of Isaac
- Departure of Ismael
- Offering Isaac
- Death of Sarah
- A bride for Isaac
- Abraham's death

Following Abraham, Genesis focuses upon the life of his descendants Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

Exposition:

Chapter 17

A token of the Covenant

25 years after entering the Canaan and 13 years after the birth of Ishmael God appears again to Abraham

This is the 5th recorded encounter between Abraham and the Lord

- Gen 12:1 – The call to leave Ur and the outline of the promise
- Gen 12:7 – Upon arriving in Canaan he is promised that this would be his land
- Gen 13:14 – After Lot departs, The promise of land is reaffirmed and the promise of descendants as the sand of the sea is added
- Gen 15:1 – Promised to be Abe’s shield and reward and promised descendants from him to outnumber the stars

Verses 1-22 record the encounter and 22-27 record Abraham’s response

Genesis 17:1-2

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I *am* Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. ²And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.”

The purpose of the appearance is **to call Abraham to holiness** and to **reaffirm the covenant** that has been made

- The Call to holiness –

“I *am* Almighty God; walk before **Me** and be blameless.

The secret to holy living is to realize that we are walking out our lives in the very presence of God

If God was aware of Hagar as she sat by a spring of water in the wilderness He is certainly aware of us as we sit before the computer screen or our smart phones

- The reaffirming of the covenant

I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.”

At least 11 times in the chapter God will say “I Will”

Abraham has nothing left, he is old, his wife is old and his attempts in the flesh to fulfill the promise have proven vain. Now God will step in and accomplish what only God can do

- The covenant includes

- A reminder that God will make Abe a father of many nations
- **A name change that is fitting for his position**
 - Abram – High or exalted Father
 - Abraham – Father of Many Nations

God seems to enjoy naming people long before their lives show evidence of the promise

Abe is childless

Israel is yet to be truly governed by God

Peter is anything but stable

This is a beautiful illustration of how God is in the business of making us into who we will become. He, like a potter, sees the finished work before He starts. One of my favorite promises Jesus gave to His followers was that if they followed Him, He would make them fishers of men. My job is to follow

- A reminder that the covenant is everlasting and involves the gift of a land

Regardless of what treaties are signed, God has given the Land to Israel as part of an everlasting covenant

- There is a brand new element to the Abrahamic covenant that we have not seen until this chapter. That is a sign or a token of the covenant

This is Abraham's part in the covenant

God calls is a token or a sign

This is a translation of the Hebrew "Owth" pronounced "oath" and means a distinguishing mark

God designed circumcision as a way of distinguishing believers from unbelievers

Paul refers to this in:

Romans 4:11

¹¹ And he received the **sign** of circumcision, a **seal** of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also

Sign – a mark that **distinguishes** a person or thing from another

Seal – usually with wax leaves an impression on something in order to **authenticate** it

The NT uses an entirely different marking system

Ephesians 1:13

¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, **you were sealed with the Holy Spirit** of promise,

2 Timothy 2:19

¹⁹Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having **this seal**: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ: **depart from iniquity.**”

A Christian is sealed with the Spirit of God who begins a transforming work within the believer at the moment of conversion. This work will continue until we are face to face with Christ and will show itself in changing both attitude and actions in the believer

What is circumcision? And why did God choose it?

- Physically it is the cutting away of the male foreskin
- Spiritually or typically it speaks of the cutting away of the flesh

God requires all who will be in covenant with Him to be circumcised

Genesis 17:10-14

¹⁰This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and **your descendants** after you: **Every male child** among you shall be circumcised; ¹¹and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. ¹²He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, **he who is born in your house** or **bought with money** from any foreigner who is not your descendant. ¹³He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and **My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.** ¹⁴And **the uncircumcised** male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person **shall be cut off** from his people; **he has broken My covenant.**”

In the New Testament

- Circumcision as a requirement for NT believers is addressed in Acts 15 at the Council in Jerusalem **and deemed unnecessary for salvation**
- In Acts 16 Timothy was circumcised because he was Jewish. This serves as an example of being all things to all people in order to win some
 - In contrast, Titus who was a gentile was not circumcised to highlight that salvation is by grace and in the church there is no longer Jew or gentile
 - In Galatians Paul uses the term circumcision to distinguish between Jew and Gentile not believer and unbeliever

Galatians 5:6

⁶For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

- In Romans 4 - Paul goes to great lengths to explain that salvation came first and that circumcision followed as an act of obedience

His argument is designed to show that God saves the same way today, Jew and gentile alike are saved by grace through faith and works are to follow

- The act of circumcision for NT believers is summed up clearly in

1 Corinthians 7:18-19

Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.

Paul goes on to declare to the Galatians:

Galatians 5:2-3

Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

- In a symbolic way all believers have been circumcised

Colossians 2:11-12

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by **putting off the body of the sins of the flesh**, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Putting off the sins of the flesh -

Circumcision is a picture of the cutting away of what must be removed from the life of the believer

Joshua 5 illustrates this, as the nation of Israel must first partake in circumcision before they can conquer Canaan

- **HEALTH – There is some evidence that circumcision has health benefits, including:**

A decreased risk of urinary tract infections

A reduced risk of some sexually transmitted diseases in men

Protection against penile cancer and a reduced risk of cervical cancer in female sex partners.

(Web MD)

It is worth noting how Abraham responded to the command

Abraham first responded to the promise of a son by laughing

Genesis 17:17-18

¹⁷Then Abraham **fell on his face and laughed**, and said in his heart, “Shall a *child* be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a *child*?” ¹⁸And Abraham said to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!”

Abe fell down laughing and offered God a more reasonable solution; *“how about we do the whole thing through Ishmael”*

God responds by guaranteeing the covenant and naming his son who will be born in a year’s time

Abraham’s second response is to carry out the act of circumcision

Genesis 17:23-27

²⁴Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. **²⁵And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old** when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. **²⁶That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael;** **²⁷and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.**

Abraham is an example of leadership

- The first cut was inward
- Second cut was in the home

It is not hard to imagine that this took some persuading to convince Ishmael and perhaps even involved some serious resistance on his part

- Third cut was toward those who worked along with him

Something must be said of a man who could convince hundreds of employees to follow him in such a difficult task

Chapter 18 -19 Where the Lot falls

Chapter 18 -19 take place within a few months of the last encounter Abraham had with the Lord and takes place in Mamre or Hebron.

Mamre was the area where:

- Abraham moved after his separation from Lot - Genesis 13:18

- Abraham was living when he heard news that Lot was captured in battle – Genesis 14:13
- Where Abraham settled and raised Isaac – Genesis 35:27
- Where Abraham purchased a cave to bury Sarah – Genesis 23:19
- Where Abraham was buried by Isaac and Ishmael – Genesis 25:9

Here the Lord appears in what is commonly referred to as a “Theophany” or a “Christophany”

That is an appearance of Christ in human form prior to His incarnation.

We are not certain how God appeared to Abraham in the previous 5 encounters, but this is the 2nd Christophany in Genesis; the first being when God appeared to Hagar

Verse 1 serves as an introduction and the verse 2 and following give the details

Genesis 18:2

²So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, **three men** were standing by him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,

Notice we are told there were 3 visitors. As the text unfolds we will learn the identity of each of them

- One of them is certainly the Lord

Genesis 18:17

¹⁷And the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing,

- The other two are angels

Genesis 19:1

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.

They came with a two-fold purpose:

First they came to once again reaffirm the promise given to Abraham

When Sarah overhears she laughs

Her laughter seems to be motivated by the same doubt that caused Abraham to fall down laughing

It what turns out to be a somewhat comical exchange she denies laughing

God's response to her laughter is worth noting

Genesis 18:14

"Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

It would do us all good to keep in mind that nothing is too hard for God. It was no more difficult for God to provide a child to Sarah at 90 than any other promise He has given. We can take comfort in knowing that natural circumstances do not hinder the abilities of God

Genesis 18:14

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

This question was not asked on a theology exam but in a real life situation. A one hundred year old man and a ninety year old barren woman were promised a child from whom a great nation would form. The promises of God were met head on by the circumstances of life which made them seem so far fetched that both Abraham and Sarah laughed. It was not improbable for a 90 woman to have a child it was impossible. Not only was she passed the age of child bearing but she had been infertile her whole life. What did not happen in her youth could not happen in her old age. Yet in these circumstances God made a promise and when the promise was doubted God asked them a question; is anything too hard for a God?

Life is filled with the improbable and the impossible. We face things that are too difficult for us to handle on a regular basis. It is vital that we come to understand that while things may be beyond our strength, nothing is too hard for God. It was not difficult for him to miraculously

provide a child to an elderly couple, nor will it be difficult for him to part a sea, provide water from a rock, knock down city walls, or topple a giant. Whatever we are facing, no matter how difficult it may seem, no matter what shadow it may cast over the promises of God we can be sure that there is nothing too hard for God.

These men had a second reason for being there

The Lord and the angels were there to judge Sodom

Genesis 18:20

And the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because **their sin is very grave,**

There sin is referred to again in

Genesis 13:13

But the men of Sodom were **exceedingly wicked and sinful** against the Lord.

SODOM IS MENTIONED 50 times in bible

21 of those are in Genesis

The last reference is when the city was destroyed

Genesis 19:28

Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.

The remaining 29 references refer to either:

The destruction of Sodom

OR

The sin of Sodom

Six of the references come from the mouth of Jesus who warns that we may receive a stricter judgment than Sodom because more light has been given to us AND that the last days will become increasingly like Sodom

Luke 17:28-30

Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

The particular sin of Sodom that finally brought the judgment of God is described in

Jude 1:7

As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, **having given themselves over to sexual immorality** and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

AND IN

Genesis 19:4-5

Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? **Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally.**"

The NIV translates it this way:

They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."

It is clear that the sin of Sodom that caused such a cry to come before The Lord was sexual sin

Sexual sin is any sexual activity outside of confines of marriage between one man and one woman

Jesus explained that it includes not only the physical act but also the lusting after another

The particular sexual sin that stood out in Sodom was homosexuality

This sin, along with all sexual sin is clearly forbidden in Scripture

If you are struggling with any form of sin, keep in mind that Christ came to set you free and give you new life.

What the bible says about homosexuality

- The Bible teaches against any sexual relations except between husband and wife.
- The Bible specifically mentions sexual intercourse between persons of the same sex as among the forbidden acts.
- Homosexual acts are mentioned in 7 Bible passages:

(Genesis 19:5, Judges 19:22) refer to rape

(Leviticus 18:21-22, Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:27) refer to intercourse between men

(Romans 1:26) refers to intercourse between women

(1 Corinthians 6:9-10) may refer to a form of male prostitution

(1tim 1:8-10) declares it as sin

- Jesus never mentioned homosexuality, but He did condemn all forms of sexual immorality:

(Mark 7:20-23)

What comes out of you is what defiles you. For from within, out of your hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile you.

God does not create a person with homosexual desires. The Bible tells us that people become homosexuals because of sin ([Romans 1:24-27](#)) and ultimately because of their own choice.

A person may be born with a greater susceptibility to homosexuality, just as some people are born with a tendency to other sins, this does not excuse the person's sin but can help to explain why some people are more prone to certain sins than others.

OTHER SINS OF SODOM FOUND WITHIN SCRIPTURE

It would be wrong to assume that homosexuality was the only sin that God looked down upon and judged. At least 3 other passages speak to the actions of those who lived in Sodom, actions that brought upon them the judgment of God

Isaiah 3:9

The look on their countenance witnesses against them,
And they declare their sin as Sodom;

They do not hide it.
Woe to their soul!
For they have brought evil upon themselves.

Refers to the open practice of sin – Those in Sodom were guilty of parading or flaunting sin.

Jeremiah 23:14

Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem:
They commit adultery and walk in lies;
They also strengthen the hands of evildoers,
So that no one turns back from his wickedness.
All of them are like Sodom to Me,
And her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

Refers to their unwillingness to turn from sin

Ezekiel 16:49-50

Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; 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 fit.

They had received great blessings from The Lord and great success yet rather than turning to the Lord they delved deeper into sin

Abe intercedes for the city

One of the most important lessons, yet one that is often overlooked is that Abe interceded for the city

It is important to keep in mind that Abraham knew of the wickedness of Sodom.

- He lived nearby
- He refused to receive anything from its king
- He watched as his nephew was taken by its depravity
- It is even possible that some of the cries that went up came from the mouth of Abraham and his bride

Yet knowing that their behaviors were both destructive to humanity and opposed to God HIS REESPONSE WAS TO PRAY FOR THEM

The basis of Abe's prayer is found in:

Genesis 18:23

And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

Abraham learned this principle from the story of Noah

Before judging humanity, God rescued the righteous delivering them from His wrath

It is clear from the body of Scriptural evidence that the righteous will face trial, tribulation and even judgment BUT THAT WILL NOT COME FROM GOD

We saw this in the story of Noah, we see it with Lot, and we will see it again with the stories of Passover and Rahab

One of the great blessings of the cross is that we are freed from the judgment of God

Romans 5:9

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:9

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

This is a great source of hope for the believer and a foundational principle in the pre-tribulation argument

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 records the actual destruction of the city of Sodom and its sister city Gomorrah.

After Abraham finished pleading with the Lord for Sodom, the angels departed for Sodom. Upon arriving in the city they soon met up with LOT who convinced them to stay with him. When the residents of the city found out, they went in search of the men in an attempt to rape them. Lot attempted to deter them by offering his two unwed daughters. This offer was rejected and the men continued to press upon Lot's door. The angels intervened and the men were smote with blindness. At this point the angels revealed to LOT that they were there to judge the city and encouraged him to gather his family and

depart. Some of the more intriguing aspects of the story include LOT's in ability to convince his own family and his sluggish response to the warning of the angels. After Lot, his wife and two daughters depart the city is leveled.

I want to highlight a few things from the story:

First - Lots downfall

Lot becomes an example of backsliding

Lot is first mentioned along with Abe when he chose to join his uncle on a spiritual pilgrimage

Lot continued with Abe and enjoyed the blessing of God.

Their abundance led to a need for the two to separate from one another

Scripture is clear that Lot was given a choice and chose to make a decision without considering spiritual matters or The Lord

Later Lot moved

-Toward Sodom,

-Into Sodom,

-Attempted to become influential in Sodom (although the contrast with Abe makes it clear that the best way to impact the world is not by befriending the world or becoming like them but by living separate)

-And became identified with Sodom (he calls them brethren)

NT makes three references to the characters in this event

First the inhabitants of Sodom:

Luke 17:28-29

²⁸ Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹ but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all.

Giving no concern to the signs of the times the people continued as though life would go on forever and the judgment caught them unaware

Jesus uses this to warn us to be prepared for the His coming

Second Lot's wife

Luke 17:32

³²Remember Lot's wife.

We do not know her name, age, interest or even what she looked like. We are incapable of remembering anything about her except the fact that after beginning to follow the Lord she looked back.

You cannot go forward looking behind you

This is particularly striking when we consider that Jesus only told us specifically to remember:

- Lot's wife
- That a servant is not greater than his master (John 15:20)
- And the cross at communion (Luke 22:19)

Finally Lot himself

2 Peter 2:6-7

⁶and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷ and delivered **righteous Lot**, *who was oppressed by* the filthy conduct of the wicked

In what may seem like a very striking statement, Peter refers to a man who:

- Walked away from God
- Camped with the wicked
- Had little influence on anyone for heavenly things

- Offered his daughters as sex objects
- Leaves the Biblical scene in drunkenness

BUT IS CALLED RIGHTEOUS

Righteousness is not based upon our activity it is based upon the work of God and trust in him

All of Lot's failures could not erase the work that the covenant brought.

It is possible however that the Vexation he experienced was the daily guilt he was under because of his sin