

- Large sections in yellow indicate portions that may be skipped.

Introduction:



- Good Evening Church, we are excited for yet another chapter in our study in Genesis. We know you all are learning a lot. As your Pastors, we too, are learning and growing in our study and presentation of the Word! Tonight, we have some things to share that we believe will challenge assumptions you may still have concerning Genesis and the patriarchs. We also will share topics that are encouraging and challenging to your walk of faith.
- As we have said before, but is worth reiterating, is that what we are studying is the seed book for Biblical doctrine and must be read with the illusion of the 1st time. Moses as the writer, does not have the entire canon of scripture that we do, and more than that, our characters such as Noah or Abraham do not have any scripture to guide, inform or help them.

- When a Covenant is Cut for Abraham, he is not thinking of the Mosaic, Davidic or New Covenant that you and I are living in and can study extensively.
- When Abraham is waiting on the birth of his son for decades, he does not know of Isaac, Jacob and all that will come from his faith. Nor does he have a testimony of 7 Barren women to stand on, he only has his Godly desire for a son and seemingly no hope of attaining it in his current situation.
- When Abraham marries and has a son with Hagar, he does not know what the Ishmaelites will become in thousands of years. He does not connect Ishmael to a hostile religion in the region of Arabia, all he sees is his son whom he loves.
- Abraham has no father of faith to look to, law to read, or pastor to consult.
- But what Abraham did have, was a word from the Lord and raw, unwavering, and bold faith in his God. This faith made Abraham righteous, you'll remember this slide.

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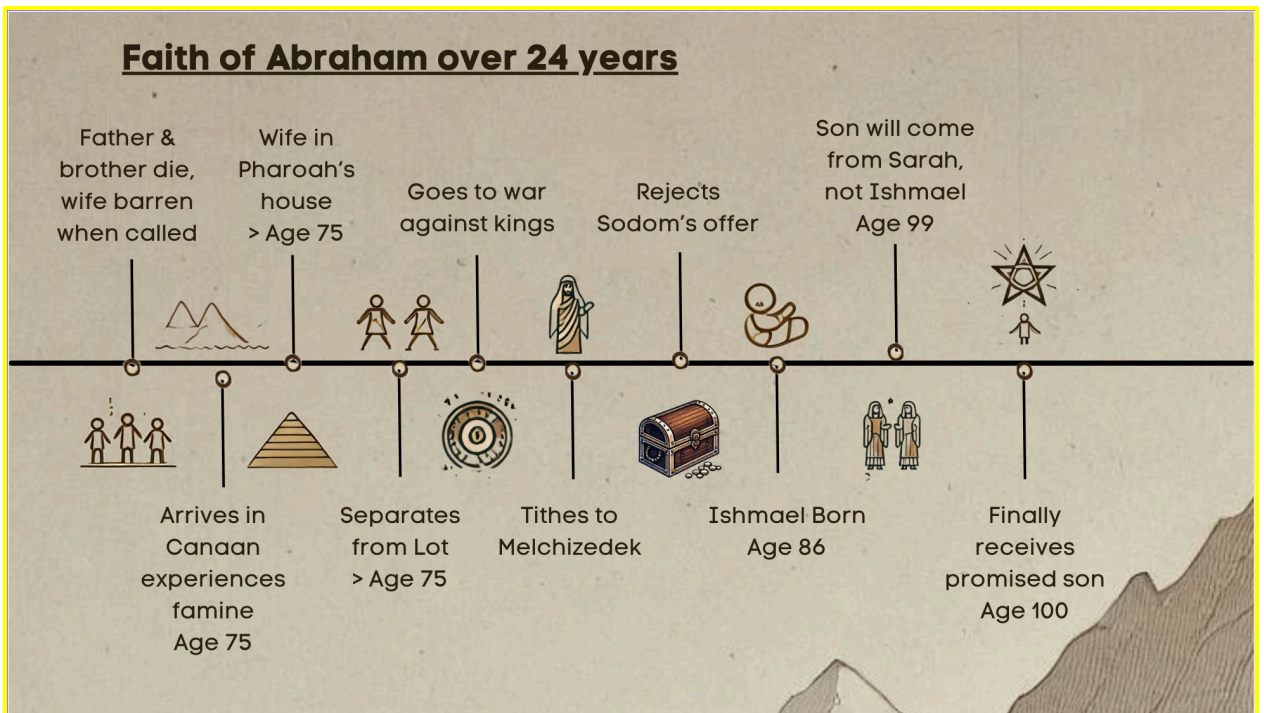
“Abram believed...”

6 The syntax of v. 6 suggests that it is to be read as a comment by the narrator, who interrupts the narration to remind the reader of a central idea. God is about to enter a "covenant" with Abram that will lie at the base of all God's future dealings with him and his seed (vv. 7-21).

Verse 6 opens the scene by setting the record straight: Abram had believed in Yahweh and had been counted as righteous. The "covenant" will not make Abram "righteous"; rather, it is on account of his "faith" that he is counted righteous. Only then can Abram enter into a covenant with God.

- Abraham's salvation was not a transaction. Abraham repeatedly obeyed the Lord through unfavorable circumstances. He trusted the Lord despite having no real manifestation of any of the Lord's words or promises in sight!
- You should view your life in the same way. Your salvation is not a transaction, but instead a journey you are on, where you get the opportunity like Abraham to prove yourself faithful through unfavorable circumstances.
- Because of his walk, God credited Abraham with righteousness, and as we have learned, Abraham could not have done it without the continual hand of God on him to provide, protect and guide his every step.
- As we have been reiterating for several weeks, the most difficult part of Abraham's journey centered around producing a son. And as you know, this took time. Look at this slide from last week.

- (SLIDE)



- From the time Abraham is given the promise that he will become a great nation to him actually having physical offspring is at least 11 years. (but that does not account for how long until

He left for Ur or how long he was in Haran!) And, it will be another 14 years until Isaac the promised Son is born!

- If we are to be called sons of Abraham or Daughters of Sarah, we must strive to possess the saving faith that they demonstrated over a lifetime.
- In Abraham's walk, we have seen how his faith over time has produced more and more clarity into his and his descendants destiny. You'll remember this slide:

- (SLIDE)

<u>Obedience</u>	leads to	<u>Further Clarity</u>
Abram goes to Canaan	-----	Offspring receive land
Parts with Lot	-----	full breadth of land
Refuses king of Sodom	-----	Sees the Debar Yahweh
Believes God	-----	Future of Descendants revealed
Hagar/Ishmael/covenant of circum.	-----	New names/Isaac's birth/land
Circumcises all males	-----	Isaac's birth timing confirmed
Willing to sacrifice Isaac	-----	Descendants blessed and victorious
Won't intermix with Canaan	-----	Secures future for his son

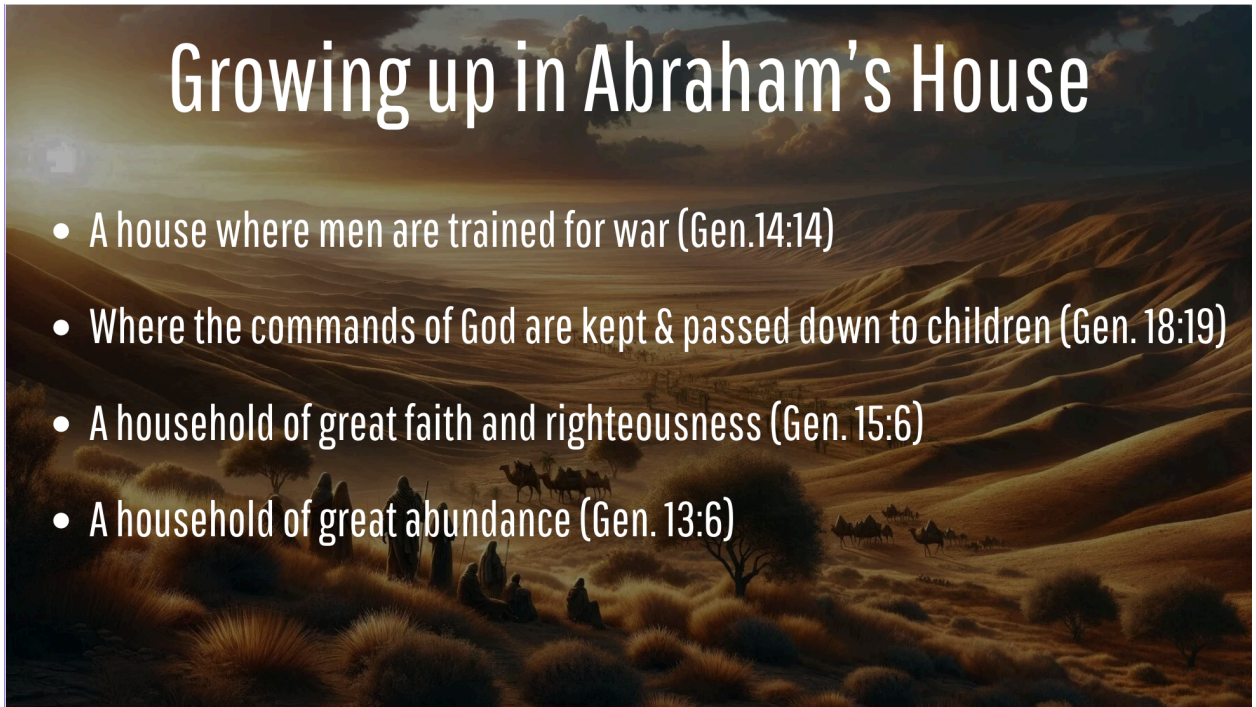
- Our blue marker has steadily moved downward as more is revealed to Abraham. Abaham's continued obedience should remind you of the contrast that usually marks the life of most believers - Lot.

- (SLIDE)



- Lot looked up and chose for himself the land he thought best in Genesis 13. He departed from Abraham, the one whom lies the favor and blessing of God, and pitches his tent at a wicked city - Sodom, where he eventually obtains a position of authority and responsibility. What Lot thought was most advantageous for himself, eventually got him in trouble with transregional powers and even more awful things in the chapters to come.
- As Lot was become more and more closely tied to Sodom, Abraham was walking in more and more faith.
- Last week Abraham learned not only will a son come from his body, but from his and Sarah's. Abraham believed that Ishmael, his one and only son was the one whom God would make his offspring as many as the sand and mighty as the stars. Abraham believed this and raised his son with this in mind - for 13 years!

- (SLIDE)



- Ishmael was Abraham's loved son, who grew up in a home where men trained for war, where Adonai was Lord, where there was great abundance. We know that Abraham loved his son deeply, last week we saw this on display as God revealed that he would not be the son to inherit the covenant.

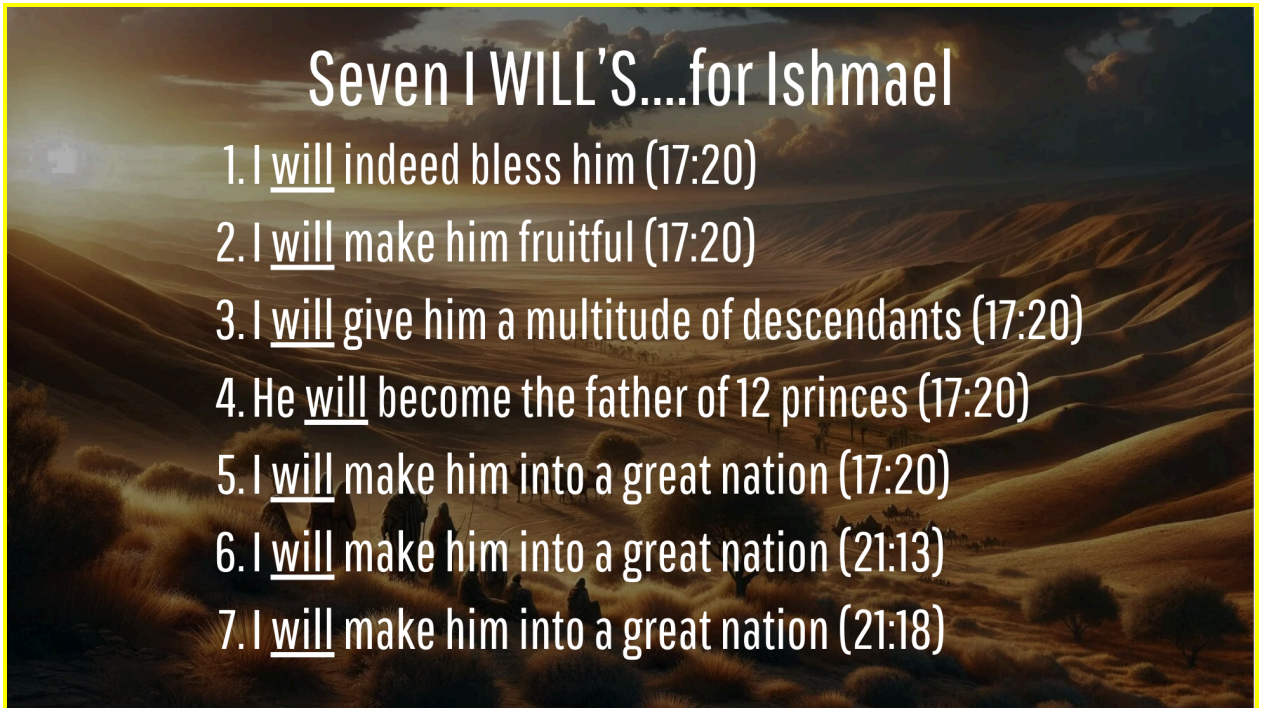
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- **Genesis 17:17-18 " (NIV)** Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

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- We saw Abraham intercede for his son. He is in disbelief that God is going to give him another son through Sarah, and is also asking that Ishmael not be forgotten.
- We know that God answers Abraham's request with 7 I will statement's for Ishmael.

- (SLIDE)



- Ishmael, although not the son of promise, is not forgotten or forsaken. Before Isaac is even born, God already has a plan for Ishmael's descendants and his other future sons to not only be blessed, but to have an opportunity to come into the family and blessing of Isaac and themselves be a blessing. You should remember this scripture from last week:

- (READ SLIDE)

Father of Many Nations

And nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising.

4 Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.

5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord.

7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house.

Isaiah 60:3-7

- As mentioned earlier, last week brought not only revelation concerning Ishmael and his descendants, but also Sarah and her part in the story. Up until now, Sarah believed she was not to be the mother of the promised son. She realized she was the problem with her and Abrahams infertility all these years. But God had more clarity to reveal.
- Sarah was not forgotten or cast aside by God, she is given her own fivefold blessing and will indeed be the Matriarch of the family of faith.
- (READ SLIDE)

Sarah's Fivefold Blessing

- I will bless her
- I will give you a son by her
- I will bless her
- She will be the mother of nations (even though she only has one son)
- Kings of peoples will come from her

- It was told to Abraham that all of this would happen to his wife. This week we are going to see what appears to be the first time Sarah hears this news! Despite her fears or mistreatment of Hagar, Sarah is commended by the Biblical writes as being the quintessential woman.

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- Tonight, in chapter 18, Abraham is going to encounter three questions that all need an answer. Abraham encounters them tonight, but these three questions are undoubtedly questions many of you have asked the Lord in your walk of faith.

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(READ SLIDE)

Three Questions in Genesis 18

- Is anything too hard for the Lord?
- Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked?
- Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Before answering too quickly, we encourage you to listen to the teaching tonight, and also examine your own walk of faith. Believing these truth's is only the beginning; you must also live in the confidence that they **are** true. Let's take a moment and consider these questions in light of our study so far.

- *Question #1*
- **Is anything too hard for the Lord?**
 - Well, in Genesis 1 we see God speak order into chaos and create all life with just the word of his mouth
 - In Genesis 8 God's perfect instructions to Noah produced the Ark that survived a global catastrophic flood that wiped out every other living thing.
 - In Genesis 12, God promises to make Abram, a man from Ur of the Chaldeans with a barren wife into a great nation. And we stand here today because of that great nation!
 - In Genesis 14, Abram engages in a war against some of the greatest military powers on earth, and wins!

- In Genesis 15, God makes a unilateral and unconditional covenant with Abram. Swearing on his own name that Abram and his descendants will inherit the land he is currently dwelling in, and Abram can do nothing to stop it!
- In Genesis 16-17, newly named Abraham and Sarah, despite their own mistakes along the journey are promised by God to have a child, even in their old age. And this child would be the custodian of the covenant given to Abraham
- So...is anything too hard for the Lord?
- *Question #2*
- **Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?**
 - In Genesis 4, wicked Cain is punished and sent away for killing Abel, but the line of Adam is preserved through another son - Seth.
 - In Genesis 5-6, we saw the genealogy of Adam's descendants leading all the way to Noah, and how Noah is preserved by God for being righteous and blameless while the wicked are swept away by the flood.
 - In Genesis 9-10, we saw that God would punish wicked Ham for exposing his father's nakedness, and he would preserve the line of Shem to be blessed by God.
 - In Genesis 14 Abram's conquest against transregional powers is all to preserve righteous Lot from being swept away with the wicked Kings.
 - So will God sweep away the righteous with the wicked?
 - *Question #3*
- **Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?**
 - In Genesis 3, because of their sin God sends Adam and Eve, the bearers of his image out of his Garden with a promise to have pain and hard work all of their days
 - In Genesis 11 God scatters the builders of the Tower of Babel across the earth for attempting to make a name for themselves.
 - In Genesis 13, God leads Abram to the land He intended for him despite Abram giving Lot first pick of where to settle.
 - So will the Judge of all the earth do right?

- Adonai, the judge of all the earth has always done what is right and good for the righteous but also what is right and just according to what the wicked deserve. Despite a flood, global rebellion or multinational kings, God has always preserved the righteous by His mighty hand; Adonai has always done incredible acts that seem impossible for man, but were altogether possible for Him.

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- **Matthew 19:26 (NIV)** “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

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- The God that we follow is the same God that Abraham followed out of his home and into a land not his own. The God that promised a son to Abraham is the same God that promises sons to many of you in the room. The God that continually provided supernaturally for Abraham is the same God that can provide for you. What sets Abraham apart as the father of the faithful? He persevered through unfavorable circumstances, for decades faithfully, despite not seeing results for years on end.
- Paul encapsulates Abraham's faith perfectly in Romans 4

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- **Romans 4:20-22 (NIV)** "he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, **21** being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. **22 This is why** “it was credited to him as righteousness.”

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- The power in Paul's writing is found in verse 22 - "**this is why**". Righteousness did not come to Abraham overnight nor in an instant, but through consistent unwavering belief in the promises of God.
- Tonight we will see more of the reasons **why** Abraham is the father of the faithful. From radical hospitality to bold intercession. You will see once again why Abraham is the prototype for any Godly man and Godly family.

- Let's have Jason Styzinski come up and read the Genesis 18 for tonight.

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Body and Exposition:

Genesis 18 (NIV 84)

1 The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.

- Our text tonight reminds us of where Abraham has been living. Gosh it feels good to call him Abraham now. **(PULL UP SLIDE)**
- He is still living at the Oaks of Mamre, no it's not a senior living facility, it's where he settled when he moved into the promised land.



- Remember this is where Abraham made a covenant with Mamre, Aner, and Eshcol and he is still living there.
- Remember what we uncovered in the text:

(SLIDE)

Allies of Abram is literally “possessors of a covenant with Abram.”

were allies		of Abram.
בְּנֵי 26	בְּרִית־ 27	→ אַבְרָם: 28
bă·'ălê'	b ^e rîṭ	'ăb·rām'
בְּנֵי 1	בְּרִית	אַבְרָם
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NCMPC	NC-SC	NPMSA
H1167	H1285	H87

*Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. (1998). A handbook on Genesis (p. 317). United Bible Societies.

- These are allies that the scripture reveals as having a covenant with Abram. This is a big deal because consider that Abraham moved here after separating from Lot back in Genesis 13.
 - **Genesis 13:14-18 (NIV 1984)** 14 The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." 18 So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord.
- This means that Abraham has been living here for more than 2 decades as he separated from Lot a few years after arriving at Canaan (being 75 years old) and he is now 99 years old.
- Think of all that Abraham has experienced and learned since then.

- He has seen the full breadth of the land that God has promised Him
- He conducted a successful rescue mission overcoming a transregional coalition of giant killing kings
- He had communion with a heavenly priest
- He rejected an offer of riches from a wicked king
- He has seen the Debar Yahweh
- The future of his descendants have been revealed
- He has a son with a name given by God
- He has entered into a covenant of circumcision with God
- He now has a promise from God about a child coming through Sarah
- And what about Lot? We learn later in the chapter that Lot is still in Sodom. We looked at Lot's journey into Sodom before, let's take a look again.

- (SLIDE)



- We can see from Lot's time since departing from Abraham, that things have not gotten consistently better. He does not seem to have grown in his obedience and revelation of the Lord, in fact we are going to learn from this chapter that rather than an

increasing prosperity, the environment that Lot is in is becoming increasingly wicked.

- Because Abraham is trusting the Lord things are going well for him and he is growing in his awareness of God's character and His plans. While Abraham experiences failures, difficulties, and trials, God is leading him and Abraham is following.
 - It should be this way with every believer. Your life should reflect greater depths of relationship with the Lord.
 - There should be a contrast between the progression of your life as a serious seeker of the Kingdom and that of a nominal believer who is living with one foot in the world.
 - Overtime the difference will become most evident in the fruit that these two men bear in their offspring.
 - Returning to the text, Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.
- The phrase "heat of the day" indicates that the story in this chapter begins somewhere around noon or afternoon. This is important because next week you will see that chapter 19 (the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah) begins just a few hours later.

2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby...

- This is now the third time this phrase has been used concerning a significant moment in Abraham's life. Let's take a look at these other occurrences to grasp how important this phrase is as a marker:
- Five major occurrences in Abraham's life:

(SLIDE)

Abraham "Looked Up"

- Gen 13:14-15 - Revelation of the breadth of the Promised Land
- Gen 15:5 - Revelation of the quantity and quality of his offspring
- Gen 18:2 - Encounter with The Angel of the Lord and revelation of judgment
- Gen 22:4-5 - Discovers the sight of the future sacrifice of the Messiah
- Gen 22:13-14 - Sees the substitutionary sacrifice provided by God that saves his son

- **Gen 13:14-15 NIV84** 14 The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

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- This first occurrence of Abraham looking up surrounds the revelation from God about the entire promised land that Abraham and his descendants would inherit forever.

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- **Gen 15:5 NIV84** 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars — if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

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- The second occurrence of looking up concerns the revelation about not only the quantity of Abraham's descendants but also the heavenly quality that they would possess.

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- **Gen 18:2 NIV84** 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.



- The third occurrence from our text tonight surrounds Abraham meeting The Angel of the Lord accompanied by two more men (later revealed as angels) who are on their way to bring judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham is about to serve these men and engage in an educational exchange with the Lord that reveals the character of God as it concerns judgment.



- **Gen 22:4-5 NIV84** 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."



- The fourth occurrence concerns the location of the sacrifice of the Messiah 2000 years later.



- **Gen 22:13-14 NIV84** 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."



- The fifth and final occurrence involves Abraham seeing the actual substitutionary sacrifice that God would provide that would save his son.
- Each of these moments is pivotal to Abraham gaining an understanding of the plan of God not only for his life but the future of his descendants. Through a series of "looking ups" God is actually refining Abraham's vision and giving him clarity about what God will do.

- Think about how important looking up is. Abraham continues to display a heavenly perspective as he grows in his faith. This “looking up” keeps his eyes continually on what God wants him to see as he waits for the evidence of what he has been promised to manifest.



2 When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. 3 He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. 4 Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. 5 Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant."

"Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

- We are going to pause here and bring some clarity about angels. Did you notice Abraham’s reaction to seeing these three “*men*” standing nearby?
- He goes to them and hurries and bows low to the ground.
- In Genesis 12, Abraham meets Pharaoh leader of Egypt, surely a powerful man, but there is no mention of Abraham bowing before Pharaoh.
- In Genesis 14, Abraham meets Melchizedek and he can tell that he is no ordinary man and so he gives him a tenth of everything he owns...but he does not bow before him.
- However last chapter we saw Abraham bow with his face to the ground twice before the Lord. Abraham knows there is something different about these three men and so he bows low. We are beginning to see more interactions with the Lord and various beings. Let’s dive into the topic of angels for a moment:
- How many angels can you name from the Bible?
 - Michael? Mentioned in Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7
 - Gabriel? Mentioned in Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26
- In light of that, consider this verse:



- **Hebrews 12:22-23:** "But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect."

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- We see in Hebrews it's not just Michael and Gabriel but thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.

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- **Matthew 26:53** "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

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- Here we see Jesus has access to more than 12 legions of angels.
- Keep in mind that during Jesus day a legion was roughly 5000-6000 soldiers.
- Jesus here is saying He has access to 60,000-70,000 angels to come to his rescue as the soldiers come for him at the garden of Gethsemane

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- **2 Kings 19:35:** "That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!"

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- One angel came and put to death 185,000 men...
- If Jesus has access to 60,000 of these...that's roughly 11.1 Billion people
- It is as if he is saying, I have access to enough angels to take out the whole world.

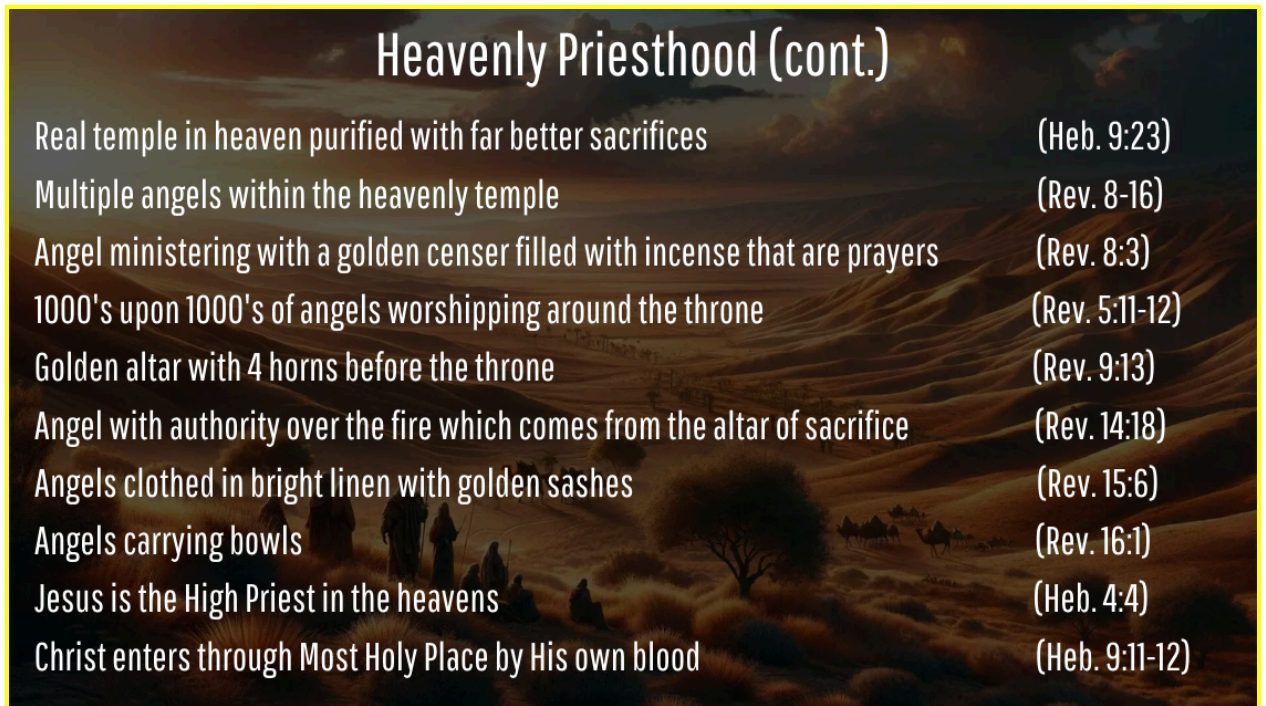
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- **Psalms 103:20:** "Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word."

- - Here angels are called mighty ones who do His bidding
- - **2 Thessalonians 1:7:** "...and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels."
- - We find out here that Jesus will be revealed with His powerful angels
- - **Jude 9:** "But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'"
- - Michael here is called an archangel, but this is the only mention of archangel in the scriptures
 - Here Michael is disputing with the devil and avoids an accusation because of a seeming hierarchy
- - **Daniel 10:13 ESV:** "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia."
- - Michael is merely **ONE** of the chief princes...there is probably more than one archangel
 - We see Michael, an archangel, one of the chief princes, assists the angel as he is fighting against the prince of the kingdom of Persia
- - **Daniel 10:20 (NIV 84):** "So he said, 'Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come.'"

- - We are learning that this unseen angelic realm is much more complex than most people realize.
 - Angels are associated with specific territories and people groups
- - **Daniel 9:21:** While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.
- - Gabriel we know from context is an angel but he is called here a man by Daniel.
- - **Hebrews 13:2 (ESV):** Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware.
- - This is a verse we will state again, but for now consider the scriptures show that there will be times when people will think they are entertaining other people but it might actually be angels. Angels being mistaken for humans is a crazy thought but also completely scriptural.
 - Also don't forget our slide from Genesis 14 that discussed the angelic priesthood operating in the Heavenly temple of which Jesus is the High priest.

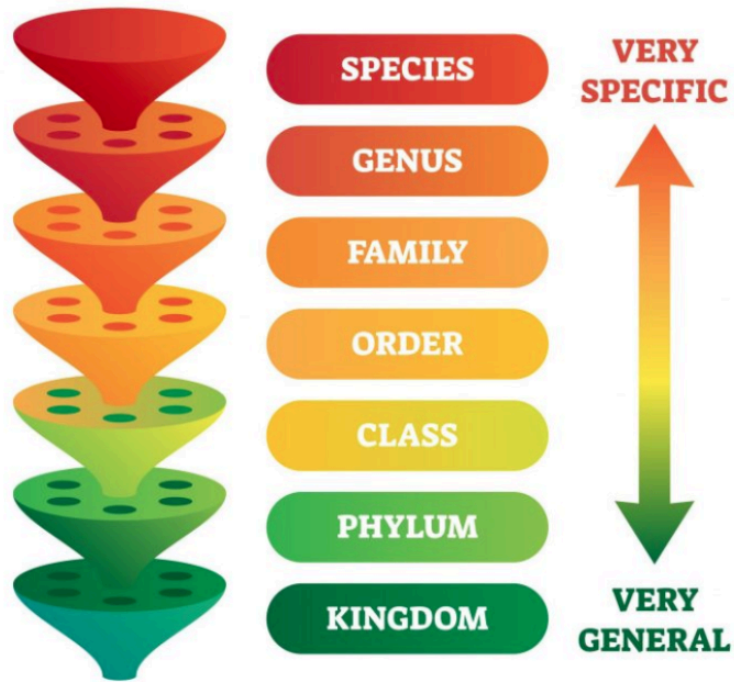
- (SLIDE)



Heavenly Priesthood (cont.)

Real temple in heaven purified with far better sacrifices	(Heb. 9:23)
Multiple angels within the heavenly temple	(Rev. 8-16)
Angel ministering with a golden censer filled with incense that are prayers	(Rev. 8:3)
1000's upon 1000's of angels worshipping around the throne	(Rev. 5:11-12)
Golden altar with 4 horns before the throne	(Rev. 9:13)
Angel with authority over the fire which comes from the altar of sacrifice	(Rev. 14:18)
Angels clothed in bright linen with golden sashes	(Rev. 15:6)
Angels carrying bowls	(Rev. 16:1)
Jesus is the High Priest in the heavens	(Heb. 4:4)
Christ enters through Most Holy Place by His own blood	(Heb. 9:11-12)

- As you look at this slide and remember more of the complexities of the angelic realm, you might start to feel a little overwhelmed.
- Remember here on the earth we have a classification system:
(SLIDE)



The classifications get more and more specific with a variety of classes and orders, it can be advantageous to think of the kingdom of heaven and the unseen realm in a similar manner. Within the classification of angels, it seems there are many derivations. We haven't even mentioned seraphim, cherubim, so on and so forth. Now in our text tonight the chapter actually begins with something fascinating:

(SLIDE)

Theophany

- A term used in theology to describe a visible and tangible manifestation of God to humans. The word comes from the Greek words "theos" (God) and "phaneia" (appearance), meaning "appearance of God."
- Gen 18:1 - The Lord here is "YHWH", the tetragrammaton
- Gen 18:3 - Abraham calls Him "MY LORD" אֲדֹנָי ('adonay, "Master") which is reserved for God

Biblical Studies Press. (2005). The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible. Biblical Studies Press.

1 "The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent..."

- The word for Lord here is "YHWH", the tetragrammaton. This is a theophany.
- Abraham in verse 3 calls Him "My Lord"
 - The NET bible contains a footnote referencing the Masoretic text from the Biblical Studies Press. The Masoretic Text has ('adonay, "Master") **which is reserved for God**. This may reflect later scribal activity. The scribes, knowing it was the LORD, may have put the proper pointing with the word instead of the more common and general term for any master or Lord.
- It would appear here that Abraham is encountering God in a new and profound way that causes him to run and bow low to the ground.
- But this begs the question, can a man actually see God?
- Let's search the scriptures for the answer to this question:
(READ THE SLIDE)

Can God Be Seen?

John 1:18 "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

John 6:46: "No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father."

Colossians 1:15: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."

1 Timothy 1:17: "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

1 Timothy 6:16: "who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen."

1 John 4:12: "No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."

Hebrews 11:27: "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible." ??????????????????????

So we need clarity because the scriptures say that Moses saw Him who is invisible and we know that this scripture can't be negating all the scriptures that come before it.

- **Exodus 3:1-4 (NIV 84):** "Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.' When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, 'Moses! Moses!' And Moses said, 'Here I am.'"

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- Pay attention to what is in this passage. It says that the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush, and it also says, "God called to him from within the bush". So is it God or is it The Angel of the Lord? YES!
- Remember the scriptures that tell us God cannot be seen are correct, and God is choosing to reveal Himself through the intermediary of The Angel of the Lord...this is the

Theophany or appearance of God and is revealed as The Angel of the Lord. Let's look at more scriptures to try to make this crystal clear.

- - **Genesis 16:7:** "The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur."
- - What you will see consistently is that The Angel of the Lord shows up at extremely pivotal moments in the story of the establishment and preservation of the nation of Israel.
 - The determination as to whether we are talking about an angel or THE angel is more complicated to determine in the original language than you would think. The key to identifying Him or His presence is context not just the specific combination of Hebrew words. Clear and undeniable passages have Him speaking for God in the 1st person or receiving worship, things "an angel" could not do and only "The angel of the Lord" could do.
- - **Genesis 22:11-12:**"But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.""
- - Here, The Angel of the Lord stays Abraham's hand from sacrificing his son and says now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld from me.
 - This is not just an angel speaking on behalf of the Lord, the angel of the Lord is using 1st person language.
- - **Genesis 31:11-13:** "The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am.' And he said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked,

speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land."

- - Once again you can see the Angel of God (the theophany) appearing to Jacob even in a dream.
 - We know this is a theophany because the angel says I am the God...it is either God revealing Himself through the angel as an intermediary or this is blasphemy.
- - **Genesis 32:24:** "So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak."
 - **Genesis 32:30:** "So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.'"
 - **Hosea 12:2-5:** "The Lord has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds. In the womb he grasped his brother's heel; as a man he struggled with God. He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there— the Lord God Almighty, the Lord is his name of renown!"
- - When put together we learn that Jacob wrestled with God but Hosea the prophet understands it was the angel.
 - Jacob was not wrong, this was the theophany, he says it, "I saw God face to face" and yet we understand that God was utilizing this intermediary because according to the scriptures we read before, God cannot be seen.
- - **1 Chronicles 21:12-18:** "three years of famine, three months of being swept away before your enemies, with their swords overtaking you, or three days of the sword of the Lord—days of plague in the land, with the angel of the Lord ravaging every part of Israel.' Now then, decide how I should answer the one

who sent me.” David said to Gad, “I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is very great; but do not let me fall into human hands.” So the Lord sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell dead. And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing so, the Lord saw it and relented concerning the disaster and said to the angel who was destroying the people, “Enough! Withdraw your hand.” The angel of the Lord was then standing at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. David looked up and saw the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell facedown. David said to God, “Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I, the shepherd, have sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Lord my God, let your hand fall on me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people.” Then the angel of the Lord ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”

- - Perhaps the most clear example of the ministry of The Angel of the Lord is found here in this passage. The angel of the Lord is standing at the threshing floor, the site of the future temple that David would build where heaven and earth would intersect. Then as David looks up the Angel of the Lord is standing with a drawn sword over Jerusalem.
 - Then the angel of the Lord orders the prophet to bring the word to David to build an altar to the Lord reminiscent of God giving Moses the words on the mountain to bring to the people so that they could know what He requires.
- - **Revelation 1:1:** "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,"

- **Revelation 1:8:** "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.'"

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- Once again the angel of the Lord now referred to as Jesus' angel says, I am the alpha and the Omega. No ordinary angel could speak this, God reveals Himself through an intermediary. This is all pointing to Jesus in whom the fullness of God dwells. He is God's representative on the earth.

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- **John 14:8-10** Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

●

- Understanding the Theophany and being able to identify the working of God through the intermediary of the Angel of the Lord throughout the Old Testament makes understanding the ministry of Jesus much more straightforward. Now the fullness of God was dwelling in bodily form walking around, among us, living, dwelling.
- And here in Genesis 18 we are witnessing God who cannot be seen physically standing with Abraham having a face to face conversation. He is eating, standing and talking with The Angel of the Lord.

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2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

3 He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by."

- At first glance, with a plain reading of the text, you could say that Abraham didn't know who these three "men" were. However, on a more careful examination, there are some key indications that we can't deny he had some idea that these men were special and different.
- The text says that while he was sitting there, he looked up, perhaps praying or meditating, and saw these three men. At the age of 100, he hurried toward them in the very heat of the day and then BOWED low to the ground.
- Do you normally run toward strangers when you see them, or is that something you do when you see someone who is familiar or very important? Regardless, Abraham's radical hospitality he is about to demonstrate to these men brought this scripture to mind:

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- **Hebrews 13:2 (NIV 1984):**"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."

-

- Considering our example in Abraham and the writer of Hebrews encouragement, we should pay special attention to Abraham's actions coming up.
- We have said before that bowing is something they did in that culture, but up to this point, we have only seen Abraham bow twice before, and both were to the Lord after he revealed the promise of his hoped-for son to him in the last chapter. Like we mentioned, He didn't bow down to other kings of the earth like Pharaoh; he didn't even bow down to Melchizedek. This word for bow is even translated as worship in other parts of the Torah.
- Not only that, but as we stated, he uses the phrase "my lord" when addressing them. The NET Bible footnote says that the term "My Lord", has the form ('Adonay', "Master") **which is reserved for God alone**. So when we review the facts of him running, at age 100, in the heat of the day, bowing down to

them, and lastly using a term of LORD that is reserved for God alone, we believe that Abraham knows that these men who have arrived at his doorstep are different from normal people.

● **4 Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. 5 Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant."**

"Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread."

7 Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. 8 He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

- As we read more about Abraham, we are continually amazed at his godly characteristics. In this chapter, Abraham's humility and hospitality are on full display. Even though we see Abraham acted appropriately for such honored guests, we can't ignore the perfect example of hospitality Abraham and Sarah exhibit and it compels those of us who are sons of Abraham, to be like him in this way.
- Let's pause to reflect on the awe-inspiring journey of this man of God over the past 25 years:
 - He has hundreds of men at his command that he has trained and cared for.
 - He has faced the most powerful men on earth, some of them in their throne room and some on the battlefield.
 - Over the years, he has been blessed with abundant wealth and resources.
 - He has traveled hundreds of miles and faithfully obeyed Yahweh.

- He himself is a lord among men, yet here in this moment, we see a man ready at a moment's notice to serve. He sees it as a privilege and honor to serve, a wonderful picture of humility and hospitality. Like Jesus, thousands of years later, he takes on the role of a servant and runs to meet the needs of his guests.
- He doesn't command servants to prepare everything, even though he could have easily done that. He himself selects the choice calf that needs to be slaughtered, brings the meal to them, and stands by while they eat in case they need anything. What would Abraham's servants be thinking about these men at this moment? They would be witnessing a man who leads in humility and service, a model for us all in our homes.



- Not only did he work quickly to provide food, but he also brought an abundance of food for his guests. When Abraham said, "Let me get you something to eat," Many translations say a "Morsel" or a "small amount." When wanting to serve someone, sometimes we say, "It's not a big deal!" when it actually is.
- Abraham is doing something similar here, trying to put them at ease. He was under promising and the whole time planned to way over deliver! The text says that he told Sarah to prepare three seahs of fine flour and make it into bread. We get lost in these ancient forms of measurement. Three seahs are about 20 quarts or 5 gallons worth of flour into bread. That is about 33 pounds of flour!! This is a HUGE amount of bread for just three guests.
- Not only did he work quickly and provide an abundance, but he also selected the BEST. As you just saw, he said FINE flour. But also, he made sure to choose the best tender calf himself. He could have had a servant do this, but he wanted to make sure that it was the absolute best. Later, God would command the Israelite fathers of households to be the ones to pick the animal without blemish that would be used in the Passover.



- **Exodus 12:3 (NIV 1984)** "Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household."



- This is in contrast with priests in Malachi who allowed the men to bring wounded and blemished sacrifices before the LORD.

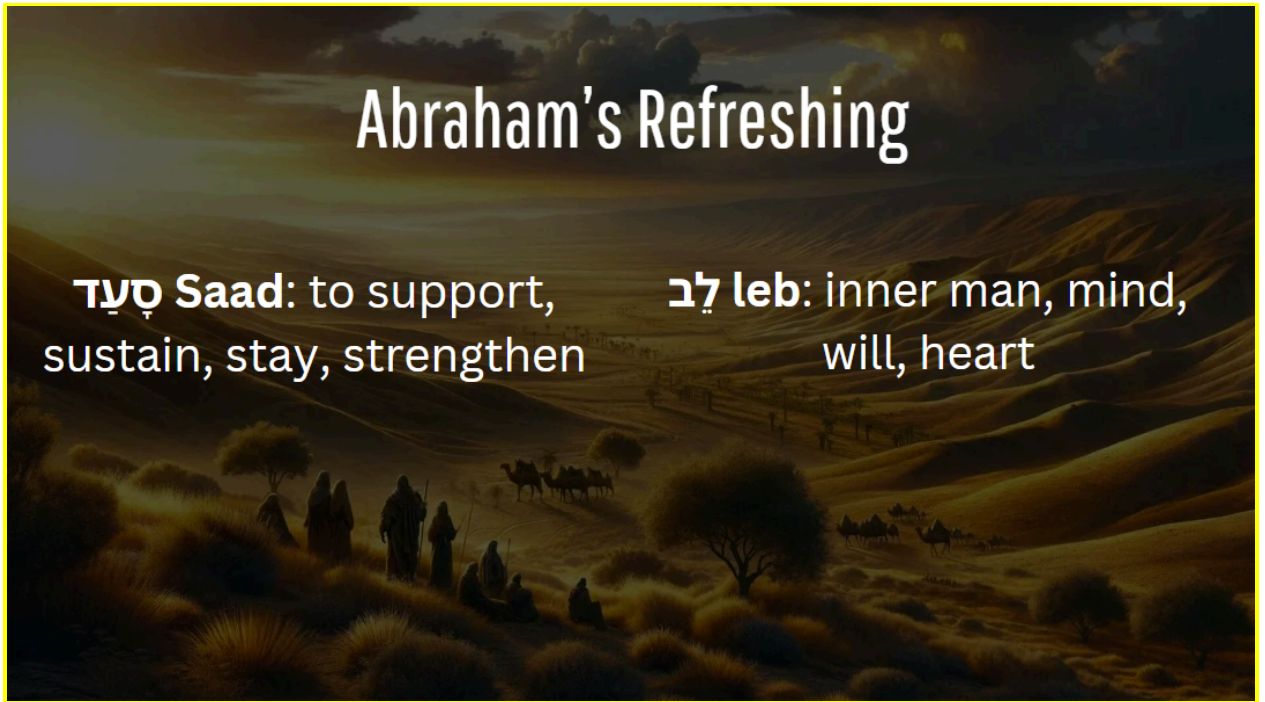


- **Malachi 1:7-8 (NIV 1984)** 7 "You place defiled food on my altar. "But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?' "By saying that the Lord's table is contemptible. 8 When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the Lord Almighty.



- We only have to look to the example of Abraham to know what kind of offering to bring to the LORD. Abraham is reflecting the offering of Abel and bringing the best of what he had for this moment of hosting the Lord.
- On top of acting quickly, providing abundantly, and giving the best of what he had, he involved the ENTIRE family in being hospitable. Many times, when we want something done right, we tend to take over. Not Abraham. He had prepared his family for this moment. Sarah didn't question preparing 33 pounds of flour into bread.
- The servants or children didn't complain or question why they are slaughtering their best calf. Instead, they responded with the same attitude and excellence as the father. Fathers, this is a call to train our families to be hospitable like the family of Abraham. Who knows who you might be entertaining?

● (SLIDE)



- In v5, when it says, "so you can be refreshed," it means "strengthen your heart" in Hebrew*.
- *Biblical Studies Press. (2006). The NET Bible First Edition Notes (Ge 18:5). Biblical Studies Press.
 - Abraham's heart of hospitality went beyond their physical needs and even met their spiritual needs. Perhaps he noticed the grave faces of these "men" on their way to do a mission that was not pleasant—the judgment of Sodom. Our hospitality must go beyond just the physical needs but look toward the spiritual needs of the heart. When you welcome others into your home, are you also seeking ways to pray for them or bless them spiritually?

● (SLIDE)

Abraham's Hospitality

- Readiness
- Urgency
- Abundance
- Excellence
- Serving as a Family
- Strengthening the heart

To summarize, Abraham's hospitality includes:

- Readiness and urgency
- Abundance
- Excellence, preparing the best
- Serving together as a family
- Seeing beyond just their physical needs

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- To nail this point home and to express the importance that God puts on hospitality, here are law, prophets, and writings of the older and newer testaments showing God desires us to reflect the hospitality of Abraham:

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- **Deuteronomy 10:18–20 (ESV)** 18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. 19 Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. **20 You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear.**

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- Do you see how loving the stranger is like giving him food and clothing?
- When we provide for strangers this way, it is demonstrating fear of the Lord and is actually serving the Lord himself. Think of what Jesus said in Matthew 25.

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- **Matthew 25:35–40 (ESV)** 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

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- Jesus is saying that when you welcome a stranger, it is the same as you welcoming Jesus himself.

●

- **1 Kings 17:10–13 (ESV)** 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” 11 And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” 12 And she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.” 13 And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son.

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- How could Elijah say so confidently, "Do not fear, go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me..."?
- Because he knew that God would bless and honor a person who is hospitable to a stranger.

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- **Job 31:31–32 (ESV)** 31 if the men of my tent have not said, 'Who is there that has not been filled with his meat?' 32 (the sojourner has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the traveler),

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- In the midst of Job's final appeal, he claims that he has not let the stranger lodge in the street and has not let them go hungry. This was a deed Job was proud of.

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- **Acts 16:15 (ESV)** 15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

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- One of Lydia's first acts as a newly regenerated believer is to prevail upon Paul to come and stay with them.

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- **Romans 12:13 (ESV)** Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

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- In this verse, we see that we seek to show hospitality actively.
- Abraham was in a position of waiting. Not only was he actively waiting and watching for a way to be hospitable, but he also had all the resources and margin to be generous in his hospitality.

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- **Revelation 3:20–21 (ESV)** 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. 21 The one

who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

- In Jesus' last letter to the churches, he beckons the church of Laodicea to open the door to him so he can come in and eat with them.
- It follows with a promise that he will be hospitable in return and welcome him to sit with him on his throne.
- As continue in our text, we can see that the author is setting up a clear contrast to the hospitality of Abraham vs the abhorrent treatment that these divine beings receive from the men of Sodom.

9 "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him.

"There, in the tent," he said.

10 Then the Lord said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

- When waiting on the Promise of God, the only question that is often more pertinent than "how is it going to come about?", is the question *"when will it come about?"*
- Waiting is a difficult for man no matter the age. What you must remember about the Lord is that He Himself transcends time, is not bound by time, and yet chooses to relate to man on our linear timeline. You all are surely familiar with this verse.

- **2 Peter 3:8 (NIV)** But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day."

- This is not the case for us mortals, that is why the Psalmist is continually asking - *how long O Lord??*
- Here in Chapter 18, after Abram many years ago is told he will indeed have a son, then years later has Ishmael, then years

later is told he will have another son with Sarah, Isaac, and now finally he is told the time for that son to come is here! - Kind of.

- The Angel of the Lord tells Abraham that next year is THE year, but still says the phrase - **About this time.**
- Notice how the Lord indicates that the time is near, but still leaves out specifics. You would think since he is forecasting a birth he would tell them the date or the month! We are spoiled with being told every detail and date in our day removing all opportunity of faith!
- For Abraham and Sarah, the appointed time is quickly approaching, yet the Lord still will require patience and faith in the interim! At every turn, Abraham and Sarah are given opportunity after opportunity to simply trust the Lord and wait on him.

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- **Psalm 37:7 (NIV 1984):** "Be still before the Lord and **wait patiently** for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes."

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- We should consider it a privilege and not a burden to wait in faith on the Lord to fulfill his promises and will in our lives. The waiting truly is the crucible that makes faithful sons.
- The word for time in the LXX is quite fascinating. Many of you have heard of the common Greek word for time: Chronos. Well in this instance it is not Chronos, but instead - Kairos.

● (SLIDE)

Genesis - Chapter 18 Verse ^ v

"Look, *she is* in the tent." ¹⁰ He said, "When **turning back**, I will come to **you** corresponding with this **time** next year,⁸ and Sarah,^h **your** wife, will have a son." Sarahⁱ heard at the door of the tent, **being** behind it. ¹¹ Abraham^j and Sarah^k were elders, **advanced** in days. Sarah^l ceased menstruation,^{j,m}

Surface	g	with this	time	next year,
MSS	←	τουτων	τον 8 καιρον	εις 11 ωρας, 12
MSS Trl		touton	ton kairon	eis hōras
Lemma		τουτος	ο καιρος	εις ωρα
Lemma Trl		houtos	ho kairos	eis hōra
Morph		RD-ASM	DASM NASM	P NAPF
Sense				

5550 χρόνος – time (in general), especially viewed in sequence (a "succession of moments"); **time in duration in the physical-space world**, sovereignly apportioned by God to each person.

Verses: Matthew 2:7/Luke 1:57/ Acts 1:6/Acts 17:30/Romans 7:1/Galatians 4:1/Jude 1:18

2540 καιρός – time as opportunity. 2540 /kairós ("opportune time") is derived from kara ("head") referring to things "coming to a head" to take full-advantage of. 2540 (kairós) is "the suitable time, the right moment (e.g. Soph., El. 1292), a favorable moment" (DNTT, 3, 833).

Verses: Matthew 8:29/Mark 13:33/John 7:6/Ephesians 5:16/Galatians 6:9-10/Revelation 1:3/Revelation 22:10

- The word Chronos is used when speaking of time generally.
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- **Luke 1:57 (NIV 1984)** "When it was **time** for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son."
-
- In contrast, the word *kairos* as you can see means the "opportune time". It is a significant time that will be the culmination of the waiting that leads up to this time. Here are a few instances:
-
- Matthew 8:29 (NIV 1984) "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the **appointed time**?"
-
- This instance is certainly fascinating. The demons in the two men know that there is an appointed time coming where Jesus will confront them. They do not specify when it is specifically, but they know it is a time yet to come and they are anticipating it.

- - Revelation 1:3 (NIV 1984) "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the **time** is near."
- - Again we see here that the end being spoken about is near. No specific time is given, just that it is near. As we all know, that time has not yet come over 2000 years later. Thus, we are closer to that time yet it is still just...near.
- - **Galatians 6:9-10 (NIV 84)** "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper **time** we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have **opportunity**, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."
- - A time is given, but it is not specified. All that is stated is that if they persevere and continue to do good they will at the *proper time*, reap a harvest. This proper time could be very near, or very far away, again it is not specified.
 - The point you could draw from this is simply: if you know it is coming but not when, you must perpetually act as one who wants to be shown faithful in the waiting and thus, never ceases from doing good.
- - **Matthew 24:45-51 (NIV 1984)** "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper **time**? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come

on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

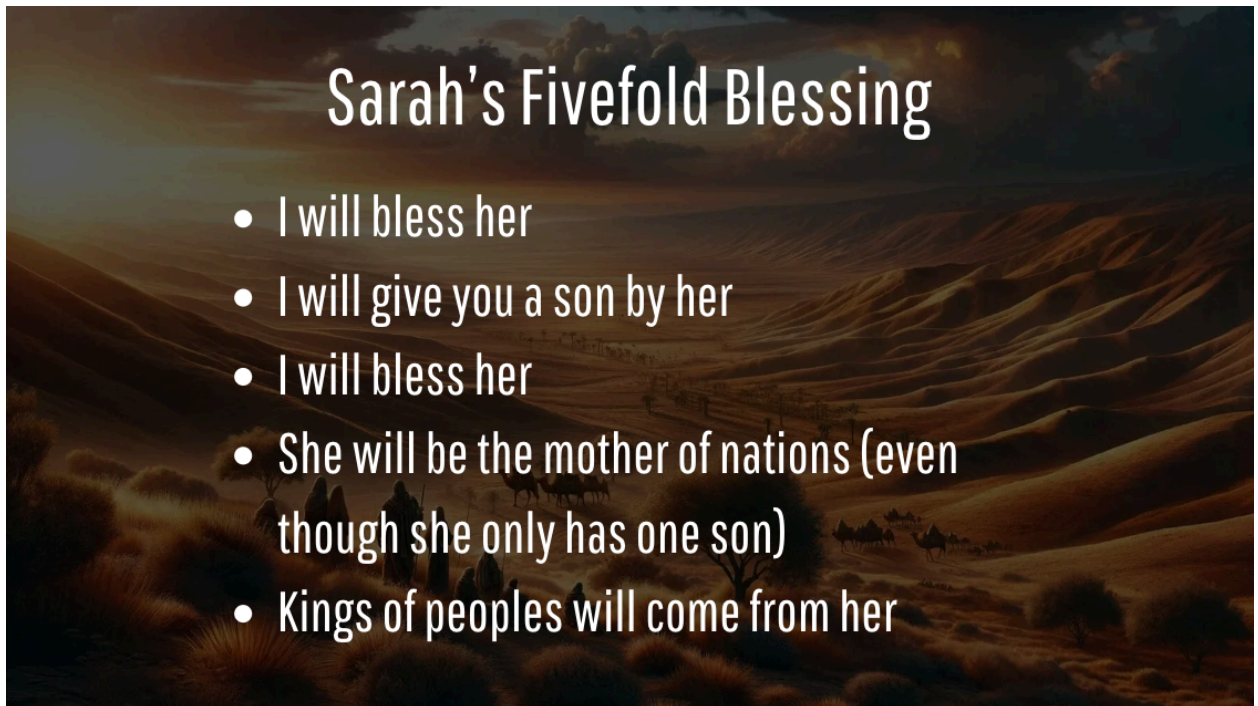
- - The good servant wants to make the master proud, therefore he works hard knowing if he continues in the work perpetually, there is no chance his master will return and find him not working. This servant is rewarded and entrusted with more.
 - In contrast, the wicked servant thinks he has time to kill until his master returns and thus squanders his time. For that servant the time comes and he is not prepared and is punished.
 - We should all strive to be like the faithful servant Abraham who looks forward to God's appointed time and faithfully serves his master every day until the time comes.

●
Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. 11 Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?" 13 Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."

15 Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh."

- Let's take a moment to talk about Sarah. This is her KAIROS time. She is going to be 90 years old soon and she has been following Abraham now on this journey from Ur of the Chaldeans for more than 25 years.
 - Sarah was with Abraham as he endured the famine after arriving in Canaan.
 - She had to spend an unknown number of nights in another man's house (Pharaoh) after they journeyed to Egypt

- She endured her husband taking all the men of the house to go to war to rescue his nephew Lot
 - She had to struggle with the thought of another woman having her husband's baby living in her own house who began to despise and look down on her
 - She has followed him for decades, 1000's of miles through crazy situations and she is still here right by his side all these years later.
- Husbands if you are thankful for a woman who has followed you through some crazy stuff and is still with you today, turn to her and say, "I'm glad you're still here"
- Let's take a second and remember some things about Sarah. Last week we got to see the Lord give Sarah her own 5 fold blessing.
- **(READ SLIDE)**



- **Isaiah 51:1-2:** "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I

called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many.

- Here Abraham and Sarah are the quarry from which those who pursue righteousness and seek the Lord are supposed to be cut.
- She goes down in history as the model, the example for women to follow.

- **1 Peter 3:4-6:** “Let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. [5](#) For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, [6](#) as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.”

- By the time Peter is writing this, Sarah is firmly cemented in history as a woman who did good and did not fear what is frightening.
- V.12 in our text tonight is the origin of the famous line “Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord.”
- Sarah submitted to Abraham in the midst of all the frightening situations their family went through and she became the example for all women for the rest of time.
- Let’s examine some of the details that happen with Sarah in this passage because there are many.
- As we mentioned earlier, the bread that Abraham instructs Sarah to make wasn’t as easy as throwing some bagels in a toaster.
- 33 pounds of flour would have been about a tenth of an acres worth of wheat or 5000 sq. ft. of harvested wheat. This is a lot of bread he asks her to make.
- We are impressed that she has this much on hand

- We are impressed that she does not argue or pull him aside to talk about what an interruption these surprise guests are or how the amount of food he is asking for is way too much and what will they eat if they give this all away or decide that now is the time to talk about how they are not spending enough time together, she just does it. She is standing at the ready and she knocks it out of the park.
- When you read in verse 11 that Sarah was past the age of childbearing, this means that Sarah was not having regular cycles anymore. She was not able to have children. When the Lord declares that she will have a son about this time next year and she is finally getting to hear it for herself, she laughs.
- We read last week in Genesis 17:17 that when Abraham hears that Sarah will have a son, he laughs.
- This week Sarah laughs.
- And God's name for the boy is "He laughs".
- The language being used here as she responds expresses her disbelief that what is being promised will actually happen.
- She declares that her body is Beloti.

- (READ THE SLIDE)



- Sarah cannot believe that she is going to experience the pleasure and joy that will be associated with her having a child at this stage in her life because she is worn out withered and ready to fall apart.
- **13 Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."**
15 Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh."
But he said, "Yes, you did laugh."
 - Notice in the text though that the Lord does not even respond to Sarah when she laughs.
 - The Lord honors the structure of authority within the home by addressing Abraham about Sarah's behavior.
 - This is reminiscent of what happened in the garden.
 - **Genesis 3:8-9** And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the

LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

- - When the Lord comes to address what is going on in the house he addresses the man as he is responsible for what has transpired.
 - True to character, the Lord does the same thing with Sarah
 - The Lord is having a conversation with Abraham about what is going to happen with his family. But the text reveals that Sarah for some reason becomes afraid and so she lies.
 - This is all of the sudden a very dangerous situation.
 - In 2 kings 5:20-27 Gehazi the servant of Elisha lies about taking gifts from Naaman (who was miraculously healed of leprosy). Elisha through prophetic insight knows what Gehazi has done and rebukes him. Gehazi’s deceit results in Naaman’s leprosy clinging to him from that day forward.
 - In 1 Samuel 15:13-14 King Saul was given instruction to completely destroy the Amalekites and all they have. Instead Saul spares the best of the livestock and King Agag. When Samuel the prophet arrives on the scene, Saul proclaims “I have carried out the Lord’s instructions” Samuel corrects him and the result is God rejects Saul as King.
 - In Acts 5:1-10 Ananias and Sapphira lie to the Holy Spirit about how much they received from the sale of their land and what portion they are giving to the church. Because they lied they both dropped dead in front of everyone.
 - Here in this moment as Sarah lies to the Lord He shows her mercy. He addresses her directly as she sins in His sight but that is as far as it goes and it is not brought up again. Surely the Lord is merciful to overlook this sin not only for Abraham’s sake, but also her’s now as she herself has been promised by the Lord what will happen about this time next year.

- For the sake of His covenant, His name, and the promises made to Israel, the Lord is surely merciful to the family of Abraham.
- What is even more beautiful is Sarah's reputation that passes down through the ages is cemented as the quarry from which righteous women are cut, the example of a trusting and submissive wife, and a woman who does not give way to fear.
- **16 When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way.**
 - In verse 16, Abraham doesn't have an idea of what mission these divine men are on or where they are going. But like the righteous men that have gone before him he had a desire to walk with the Lord as much as possible. The phrase, "Abraham, walked with them" is significant considering he is walking with God's representative, the Angel of the Lord.
 - This concept of walking with God is shown in the righteous men that have gone before Abraham, that didn't just believe...but faithfully walked out that belief.
 - Gen 5:22 says, that Enoch walked God
 - Genesis 6:9 says, "Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God." (NIV)
 - Later, after the nation of Israel has been established, God commands that all Israel walk in the way, in Deuteronomy 5:33.
 - Both Enoch and Noah faithfully walked with God and were the only examples that Abraham had of what a life lived with God looked like. God himself commanded Abraham to "walk before me faithfully and be blameless" in the first verse of the last chapter and now we get to see him doing that very thing.
 - Throughout the Bible, this concept of walking with the Lord is further explained:

- (SLIDE)

Isaiah 33:14–16 (ESV)

14 The sinners in Zion are afraid;
trembling has seized the godless:
“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?
Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”
15 He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,
16 he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.

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- We see this amazing contrast of sinners not being able to dwell with the consuming fire but he who WALKS righteously is dwelling on the heights, his place of defense a fortress and his bread and water is supplied.
- Abraham walking with the Lord is a living picture of these verses being played out. He is with God dwelling on the heights and they are about to be looking down on Sodom who are godless sinners about to experience the consuming fire of God.

- (SLIDE)

Micah 6:6-8 (ESV)

6 “With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

8 He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

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- but to **do justice**, and to **love kindness**,
and to **walk humbly with your God?**

- Isn't it incredible that many of these things Abraham did:
Bowing himself, giving a calf, even later on in his life offering his
first born...but most of all, God was pleased, and counted
Abraham as righteous because he walked humbly with the
Lord, he was learning justice in the moment and Abraham loved
kindness.

- (SLIDE)

Psalm 15:1–2 (ESV)

1 O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent?
Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

2 He who walks blamelessly and does what is right
and speaks truth in his heart;

Isaiah 30:20–21 (ESV) 20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. 21 And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

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- Who shall **dwell on your holy hill?**

- 2 He who **walks blamelessly** and **does what is right**
and **speaks truth in his heart;**

- Abraham was a man who was walking blamelessly, doing what is right, and speaking the truth in his heart.

- Abraham was always seeking the truth in his heart to understand. Like Isaiah 30:20-21 talks about:

- **Isaiah 30:20–21 (ESV)** 20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. 21 And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “**This is the way, walk in it,**” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

- The key to understanding this next section of Genesis 18 is to understand that Abraham had complete trust in the Lord and his desire is to learn more about God. He is seeking truth, he is

seeking to understand, and he is seeking to be taught. Not to conduct a negotiation with God.



17 Then the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? 18 Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.

- The first thing that we want cover is the question: Who is the Lord talking to?
- Well, we can tell you he is not talking to himself like a ventriloquist...
- He is discussing this with Members of His council, the angels who serve and represent Him who are being sent to investigate, judge and save.



- Contrary to the opinions of some, this passage is not a proof of the trinity. We believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of course, but this is not an instance or proof of that. That would presume that Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit are physically manifested in Genesis 18 and we have already established that God cannot be seen.



- This should be viewed as The Angel of the Lord, a theophany, the appearance of God through a mediator, showing up with two divine beings to intervene in the events on the earth. In the next chapter, Genesis 19:1 has the two men as angels. This is not the Father, Son & Holy Spirit showing up physically on earth. That is an erroneous oversimplification. The two "men" are two angels appointed to investigate the condition of and if necessary, bring judgment upon, Sodom and save Lot.



- Here are a few more examples of God interacting in a Divine Council.

- (TWO SLIDES)

God's Divine Council:

- Genesis 1:26: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
- Genesis 11:5-7: But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."

God's Divine Council (Continued):

- Jeremiah 23:22: But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds.
- Psalm 82:1: God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment.

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- All of these scriptures point to a heavenly council that God interacts with in his rule over the heavens and earth.

●

Secondly, in these verses we see God's desire to include Abraham in His plans.

- The point of the question, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" is whether or not Abraham is going to enjoy the privilege of access to the divine committee's deliberations that prophets enjoy. This is a question to which God already knows the answer, He phrases it in almost a rhetorical manner. Because of context, another way this could be phrased is, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do... seeing as I have chosen him."

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- **Amos 3:7 (ESV)** "For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.

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- God is honoring the authority that he has entrusted to Abraham by bringing him into his close council. He has made Abraham father and ruler over this land and he wants to treat Abraham as such by giving him knowledge about what will take place, similar to what He has already done in Genesis 15 concerning his descendants and the Amorites judgment.

- **Genesis 15:16** "In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

- **(SLIDE)**

Rashi on Genesis 18:17

WHAT I AM DOING in Sodom. It is not proper for Me to do this thing without his knowledge. I gave him this land and these five cities therefore are his – as it is said, (10:19) "And the territory of the Canaanites was from Sidon ... as thou goest towards Sodom and Gommorah etc." I called him Abraham, the father of a multitude of nations; should I destroy the children without informing the father who loves me? (Genesis Rabbah 49:2)

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-
- Verse 18 alludes to the same reasoning that Rashi is talking about. He has been granted authority over this region and he WILL become a great and powerful nation so he should be included in the Divine Council.
-
- "Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on the earth will be blessed through him." is a slightly modified version of 12:2-3. The addition of the adjective "powerful" and the substitution of "nations" for "families" seem to make the original promise even clearer and even greater.
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- Let's take a look at another passage where a man, in this case, the prophet Micaiah is given special knowledge about the inner workings of God's divine council.
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- **1 Kings 22:19-23 (NIV 84)** "Micaiah continued, 'Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. And the Lord said, "Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?" One suggested this, and another that. Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, "I will entice him." "By what means?" the Lord asked. "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets," he said. "You will succeed in enticing him," said the Lord. "Go and do it." So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you.'"
-
- Here in this passage Micaiah is given insight into what happened in the spiritual realm that was bringing about the earthly reality surrounding him. God is conferring with the hosts of heaven standing around him on his right and left.
-
- And now, in our text tonight, Abraham is being given the privilege of participating in the discussion about what is about to happen with Sodom and Gomorrah.
-
- The third point we want to make about verses 17 and 18 is that this upcoming exchange between God and Abraham is about education and training, not about negotiation.
- We must ask ourselves, knowing the rest of this story, if God is perfectly just and has already made plans to investigate the city and not destroy the righteous with the wicked, then what is the reason for this back and forth with the Lord?
- Three reasons:

- God wants to include Abraham because of the authority He entrusted him with and his obedience to God's calling.
- God wants Abraham to grow in his knowledge of God and allow Abraham the opportunity to know him. Abraham didn't have to welcome him into his home. Abraham didn't have to follow them, but he did and God didn't refuse it.
- God is training Abraham how to judge rightly. How to correctly rule over this land. If Abraham and his descendants are to be stars in the sky, rulers, then they needed to be trained how to rightly rule.



19 For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

- As we seek to gain insight from the text we are posed with a question from the simple reading, God has chosen Abraham, this is plain, what follows requires careful examination:
- Did God choose Abraham because he was the kind of man who would direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, or was God making him into that kind of man?
- Rather than postulating or giving up, let's consult multiple versions, the LXX, some trusted commentaries and most importantly previous scriptures and see if the answer doesn't become much clearer.

(READ THE SLIDE)

Genesis 18:19

ABP_Strongs⁽ⁱ⁾

19 ^{G1492} For I had known ^{G1063} ^{G3754} that ^{G4929} he will order ^{G3588} ^{G5207} his sons, ^{G1473}
^{G2532} and ^{G3588} ^{G3624} his house ^{G1473} ^{G3326} after ^{G1473} him; ^{G2532} and ^{G5442} they will guard ^{G3588} the
^{G3598} ways ^{G2962} of *the* LORD, ^{G3588} ^{G4160} to do ^{G1343} righteousness and ^{G2532} ^{G2920} judgment; ^{G3704} that
^{G302} ^{G1863} *the* LORD may bring ^{G2962} ^{G1909} upon ^{G*} Abraham ^{G3956} all ^{G3745} as much as
^{G2980} he said ^{G4314} to ^{G1473} him.

- **Genesis 18:19 (KJV):** For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.
- You guys have grown in your scholarship, and you'll be familiar with the Hebrew word here Yada (Strongs #3045). This is to be known intimately. God has experience with Abraham and has seen how his wife and nephew followed him as he left Haran. How 318 trained men in his household followed him into battle against an alliance of kings into foreign territory. He has watched Abraham follow His instructions and pass them down to his household. God knows him and He is observing him as he instructs his house in the way of the Lord.
- Before going further, let's consult the previous chapter to see Abraham displaying exactly what he is being credited with in our text tonight.
- Remember, Abraham was given one of the most difficult new commands that we can think of, circumcision.

- - **Genesis 17:23-27: 23** On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him. 24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, 25 and his son Ishmael was thirteen; 26 Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that very day. 27 And every male in Abraham's household, including those born in his household or bought from a foreigner, was circumcised with him.
- - It is highly likely that chapter 18 is unfolding within days of chapter 17 and at the most months, but not years because of the promise concerning Isaac. Surely, Abraham's demonstrated faithfulness in circumcising his son and every male in his household is in view as the Lord affirms Abraham as a man who will not only command and direct his children but all his household in the ways of the Lord.
- Rashi's take on this passage affirms our findings as well:

(READ THE SLIDE)

Rashi on Genesis 18:19

For I have known him: Heb. יִדְעָתִיו, an expression of love, like (Ruth 2:1) "a kinsman (מוֹדֵעַ) of her husband"; (ibid. 3:2) "And now, Boaz our kinsman (מוֹדֵעֵינוּ)"; (Exod. 33:17): "and I shall know you (וְיָדַעְתִּיךָ) by name." But, in fact, the primary meaning of them all is none other than an expression of knowing, for if one loves a person, he draws him near to himself and knows him and is familiar with him. Now why do I love him? "Because he commands" ... for he commands his sons concerning Me, to keep My ways. But if you explain it as the Targum renders: "I know about him that he will command his sons, etc.," the word לְמַעַן does not fit into the sense [of the verse].

because he commands: Heb. יִצְוֶה, a present tense (i.e., a habitual action), like (Job 1:5) "So would Job do (יַעֲשֶׂה)"; [(Num. 9:20) "in accordance to the utterance of the Lord they would camp" (יִחַבּוּ)].

- The question truly is, has Abraham already demonstrated that he is a man known by the Lord, who follows the commands of God and teaches his children to do the same? The answer is undoubtedly, yes.
- If this is true, then we know that by the time the Lord says this that Abraham is already this kind of man and therefore is privileged to receive this insight into the Lord's plans.
- Abraham has proven himself as a man who keeps God's ways and just like our study of his righteousness being credited before the events of Genesis 15 we can rightly conclude that Abraham is a man who presently commands his children and household to do what is just and right and God knows that he will continue to do these things going forward.
- It is beneficial for us to explore the profound connection between Abraham being privileged to participate in a conference with the Lord because of how he directs his children and his home.
- The language the Lord uses is plain and straightforward.
- Abraham was a man who:
 - Directed his children
 - Directed his house - anyone under his sphere of influence
 - Directed them after his way of life- led by example
 - Kept the way of the Lord
 - Did what was right and just

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- **1 Timothy 3:2-5:** "Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)"

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- 1000's of years after Abraham, the proving ground for any leader is how they conduct their home.
- Notice traits of a leader that we have already seen in Abraham, most importantly managing his own family well, seeing that his children obey him and doing it in a manner worthy of full respect
-
- **Titus 1:6-9** An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. 7 Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. 8 Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. 9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.
-
- Once again, we see leadership qualifications connected immediately to how someone conducts their home
- Abraham will become the father of all Israel, but before that he was simply a good father to those in his household
- When you are reading the Newer Testament you should begin to get in the habit of asking yourself, “how did this author know what to write about this subject?”
- How did Paul know about specific requirements of what a leader needed to be?
 - He could have indicated that an elder, pastor, or deacon needs to be a great fundraiser
 - Any church leader needs to have the administrative skills of a fortune 500 CEO
 - He must be a great speaker
 - Why weren't these things included?
 - Because the scripture doesn't mention these things about Abraham...but it does say that Abraham's house followed him.

It does say that he led them. And God builds a nation out of a man like this.

- These are the things Paul knows must be present in any leader in the church. This is why all requirements for leadership start off with how you lead your home because this is what Abraham was commended for. Now is a good time to remember our verse from Isaiah 51.
 - **Isaiah 51:1-2 (NIV 1984):** ""Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn;"look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many."
 - Paul knew to start with the example of Abraham because he was the rock from which all righteous men would be cut and this moment tonight in our text reveals that God includes Abraham in conference because of how he led his house.
 - What do you want to be remembered by men?
 - If it is not the way you lead your house, then what are you chasing?
 - Many men seek to become special outside their home, this is the contrast we will see in the very next chapter with Lot. Abraham is seated at the door of his house with a family in order. Lot is seated at the gate of the city with a family in chaos.
 - Abraham was utilized, Lot had to be rescued.
 - Men, the expectation for your life is that you like Abraham would:
- **(READ THE SLIDE)**

The Genesis of a Leader:

- Direct your children
- Direct those under your sphere of influence
- Impart your way of life to them (this is leading by example)
- Keep the ways of the Lord
- Do what is right and just

- Living this way will cause you to be utilized in the Lord's work in the revelation of His plans and in administering His Kingdom here on earth.

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20 Then the Lord said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous 21 that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."

- Upon reading these verses some of the language should stick out to you as familiar.

- Go down and see

- This same language appeared in Genesis 11 and will appear again in the Torah. This should show us that our God is not aloof or indifferent. He is active, listening, ready and waiting to come, rescue and enact judgment.

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- **Genesis 11:5 (NIV 1984) "But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building."**

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- There was rebellion at Babel, mankind was trying to make a name for themselves and God did not stay up in heaven and watch from a distance and do nothing. He came down, saw what was going on and acted!
- This shows that God sees and takes personal responsibility to act; something he will continually demonstrate throughout the Bible.
- This continues in Exodus:



- **Exodus 3:7-8 (NIV 1984)** "The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey...'"



- God hears of suffering for those he loves and takes it upon himself to come down and save.
- The heart of God cannot stand by while wickedness or injustice is present, especially in his covenant people! God not only saves Israel, but judges Egypt, he does both.
- Christendom has had the bad habit of focusing usually on one and not both of these essential aspects of the Lord. For this generation, Christians love to speak on his saving power but rarely his power to judge the wicked.
- The language here is "*I have indeed seen*" and "*I am concerned about their suffering*", and "*I have come down*". Do you see how personal this is for the Lord? It says God sees and that HE is the one who will come down and rescue. How does God accomplish this in the Exodus? By sending a man - Moses as his representative to the people. Moses is even said to be like God!



- **Exodus 7:1-5 (NIV 1984)** "Then the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it."



- God is said to be the one who will save the Israelites in Exodus 3, and here, God tells Moses that he will be LIKE GOD to Pharaoh! It goes on to say that God will lay his hand on Egypt and bring out his people. There is no dispute that God is the one who is enacting judgment and saving, but he is doing it with man as his instrument.
- This has been Abraham's story his entire journey. God promised that he would make Abraham into a great nation, but Abraham will be the father who raises the promised son. God uses Abraham to bring about his will and plan. God certainly conquered the multinational Kings in Genesis 14, but Abraham was the man on the ground with a sword in his hand! What an awesome privilege to be used by God to further His will and plan even through tremendous difficulty.
- This is our destiny as believers. We serve a God who sees and desires to rescue his people from suffering and enact righteous judgment on the wicked, and he uses man, his image bearers to complete it.



- **Jeremiah 1:9-10 (NIV 1984)** *"Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, 'Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations*

and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

- - God appoints the young prophet Jeremiah with the great responsibility of carrying the words of God, not only that, but uprooting, tearing down, destroying and overthrowing nations. This is the call and responsibility of all men of faith who dare represent God in a world in desperate need of salvation.
- - **Psalm 149:6-9 (NIV 1984)** *"May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his faithful people."*
- - The glory of God's faithful people is to praise God, and wield a sword of justice in their hand.
 - In Genesis 18, The Angel of the Theophany comes with two other angels. What we are going to see in a minute is they came not only to tell them of the appointed time soon coming where the promised son would be born, but also to confer with him concerning the judgment on Sodom.
 - Many of us in the room have situations in front of us where there is distress, injustice, and questions about what will come to be. The Lord - El Roi sees you, just as he saw Hagar, and just as he sees the injustice going on in Sodom. He is not indifferent or absent. Perhaps the distress or injustice you are seeing is an invitation by God himself to be his mouthpiece and his right hand to represent Him on the earth.
 - If we had time, we would discuss the prophetic pattern that forecasted that God, in the likeness of man would see, come down, and rescue and save, but that discussion will have to wait for another night.

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22 The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. 23 Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

- It will become clear in the following verses and the next chapter that two of the *men* leave for Sodom while the Angel of the Theophany stays with Abraham. (Only two men will meet Lot at Sodom, not three). It is here that Abraham asks our 2nd and 3rd questions of the night - "*Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?*" and "*Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?*".
 - Previously we went through some examples of God bringing judgment and saving, this is what he will do in Sodom, but you have to remember, Abraham did not have the scripture we have, this situation is his reality and he is living it for the 1st time! When Abraham asks a question, he genuinely wants to know! Over the course of decades now, Adonai has been revealing himself more and more to Abraham, and now, Abraham is asking the Lord two honest questions - why? To understand the God he serves more!
 - An easy pitfall that is inconsistent with the rest of scripture is to make this a story about arguing with God or God's judgment changing. We will make it clear that God does not change his mind and he always intended to save Lot (probably Abraham's chief concern). We are going to prove this to you in two ways. First, lets survey the rest of scripture.
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- **Numbers 23:19 (NIV 1984)** "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?"

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- **1 Samuel 15:29 (NIV 1984)** "He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind."

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- **Psalms 33:11 (NIV 1984)** "But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations."

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- **Malachi 3:6 (NIV 1984)** "I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed."

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- **Hebrews 13:8 (NIV 1984)** "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

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- These verses hardly need explanation. It is said repeatedly that God does not change his mind, he does not lie, only man does such things. His plans are made and stand firm forever.
- Passages such as this one truly do not contradict this eternal truth when the context is fully understood!
- Our second proof is If we go on to read the next chapter it would not enter our minds that God changed his mind or was going to sweep away the righteous.
- When the two angels get to Sodom, what do they do? They go to Lot's house, lets read forward just a little bit to see this.

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- **Genesis 19:12-13** "12 The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, 13 because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.""

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- The angels are not present with Abraham or the Lord when Abraham asks the question - *"Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"* Yet, they already have instructions from the Lord to rescue righteous Lot and his family! Abraham did not know this, but this was the plan all along, despite Abraham's request, the Angels already knew to preserve the only righteous one in Sodom! So to answer our questions - *will God sweep away the righteous with the wicked*, the answer is no he will not!" and *"Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"*, the answer is - yes, he always does.

- - **Deuteronomy 32:4** "He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."

- **26 The Lord said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."**

27 Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, 28 what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?"

"If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it."

29 Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?"

He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it."

30 Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?"

He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

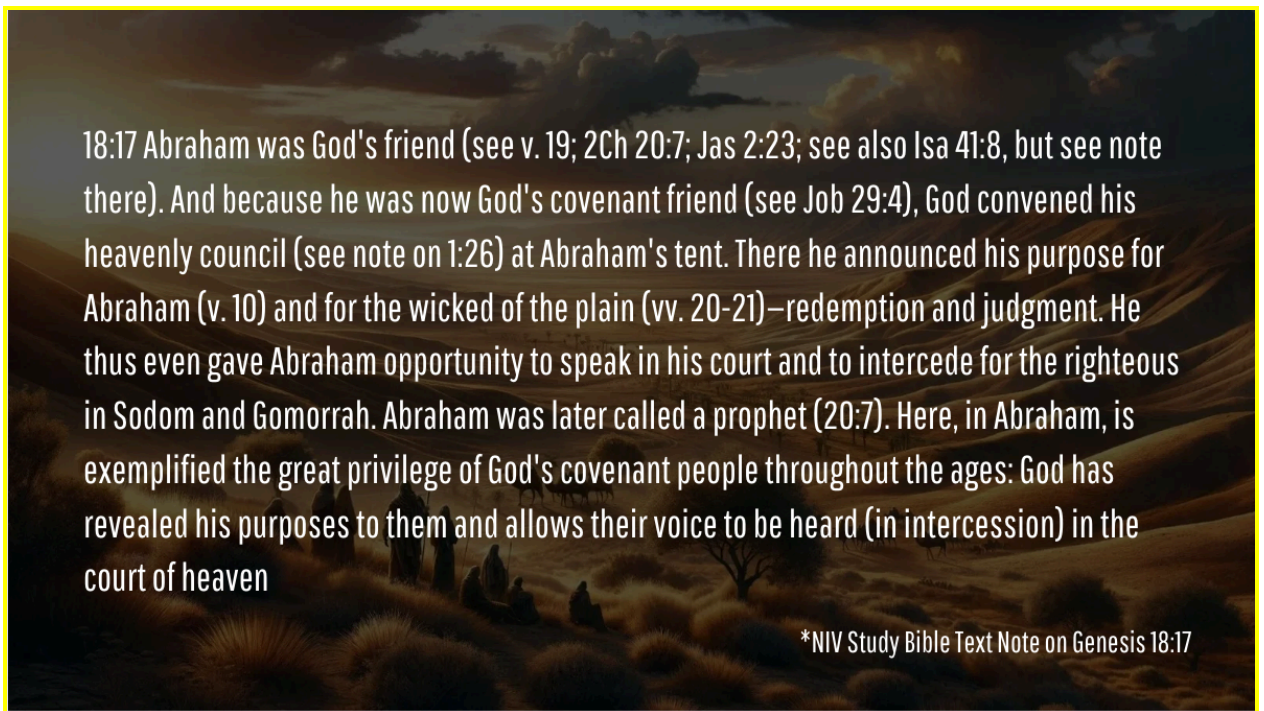
31 Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?"

He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it."

32 Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?"

He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it."

- Once we understand the proper context of this exchange, it changes from a negotiation between Abraham and the Lord and instead an Education between a father and a son.
- The angels run-in with Abraham is not by chance or accident. The Lord positioned Abraham and the angels to cross paths for the purpose of building up his son and giving him the opportunity to sit in his council as we mentioned earlier. Look at this commentary from the NIV Study Bible
- **(READ SLIDE)**



- Abraham is the prototype for the faithful leader, Abraham is the prototype of a faithful father, and Abraham is the prototype for a faithful intercessor. God was the one who granted Abraham this great privilege, not the other way around.
- **33 When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.**
 - As we are nearing a close and in preparation for next week, we would like to remind you that Abraham and Lot have been in this situation before in Genesis 14. Lot has once again found himself in trouble and Abraham is again moved to help.

- Back in Genesis 14, Lot and his family were under threat by external forces and he was captured in a war. Abraham's response was to quickly gather his men and conduct a military rescue.
- Here in Genesis 18, the threat that Lot and his family are under is not from earthly forces, but instead it is divine judgment. Abraham's response is still an active one, but it is with prayer and intercession, not to run to Lot and get him out of there.
- This is important for us.
- How many times do we respond to a spiritual problem with a physical solution? Abraham does not do this. He is actively conversing with the Lord, resting and trusting in Adonai that he will do what is right.
 - In Numbers 16, Aaron did not respond to the judgment of God by opening a medicinal shop. No, as a high priest he ran in the middle of the people with the censor and stood between the living and the dead.
 - In 1 Chronicles 21, David did not respond to the judgment of God with physical force. No, he followed the instruction from The Angel of the LORD to offer atoning sacrifices for his sin that didn't cost him nothing.
- Abraham is already applying what he just learned in his own personal life:

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

 - There is nothing that Abraham could do physically to receive a son through Sarah. He needed the miraculous power of God for that to occur.
 - In the same way, Abraham knew this was no physical battle to be won with force. All he could do was trust in the Lord and so he returned home with that trust in mind.
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- As we end our text tonight we wanted to draw your attention to a shift that has happened. As we are journeying through Abraham's life, we are getting glimpses into the going's on in

his own home and with his own family and then we get chances to see his story intersect with the larger world.

- We saw this in Genesis 12 with Pharaoh in Egypt.
- We saw it as Abraham journeyed hundreds of miles away from his home to fight against the transregional coalition of kings.
- He plundered Egypt and was brought safely through
- He overpowered a numerically superior army in a rescue mission
- And tonight, we are watching him interact with the theophany, an appearance of God through an intermediary concerning judgment upon gentiles.
- We noticed some details in each section of our text that hint at a larger progression within the greater calling of Abraham and his descendants.



GENESIS 18 SECTION COMPARISON

VERSES 1-15	VERSES 16-33
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The “men” arrive• The story starts in Mamre• The humble and hospitable host• Themed Rhetorical Question<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”• The noise provoking the Lord:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sarah’s Laugh	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare to depart• Ends in Mamre• Becomes the bold intercessor• Themed Rhetorical Question<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ “Will not the judge of all the earth do right?”• The noise provoking the Lord:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sodom’s groans

- The text tonight begins and ends in Mamre.
 - Salvation for the world begins and ends with Abraham’s family. It starts here and culminates here.

- We have men arrive in verses 1-15 and we have them depart in 16-33.
 - God brought His people into the land of Israel and then He sent His own out into the world to bring salvation to those who would receive it and judgment to those who rejected it.
- Abraham begins as a servant, as a humble and hospitable host. In the second part of our text, he is acting as a bold intercessor.

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- **Isaiah 42:1 NIV 1984:** "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations."

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- It has always been God's plan to take His servant, His chosen one and impart to him His Spirit, so that he would bring justice to the nations.
- Abraham tonight is the chosen servant who encounters God and seeks justice for the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah.
- The question is asked in the first section, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"
- When Mary was told she would be pregnant with Jesus who is called the Son of Abraham in the opening chapter of the newer testament, she, like Sarah wondered how it could happen. The angel assured her that nothing was impossible with God.
- In the second section we hear from Abraham "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" and "Will not the judge of all the earth do right?"
- We want to answer these questions unequivocally tonight with two passages, one from a daughter of Abraham, and one from a son.

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- **Luke 1:68-73 NIV 1984:** "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long

ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us— to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham."

- - 2000 years after Abraham, Mary is still referring to him as father, and God has not forgotten His covenant with Abraham. He is still showing mercy down through the generations.
- - **Romans 11:1-5, 25-27 NIV 1984:** "I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: 'Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me'? And what was God's answer to him? 'I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace."**Verses 25-27:** "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.'"
- - God never has rejected His people and never will. He preserves the righteous through judgment because of His grace and the covenant He made with Abraham. Just like his nephew Lot who has been an easy target because his failings are on full display, God is still preserving and rescuing him. And remember Peter calls him righteous in 2 Peter 2:7
 - And concerning whether or not the judge of all the earth will do what is right...remember the original promise made to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through him...God works

through Abraham's descendants through all of their failures and successes and fulfills His Word to His friend and brings in the full number of Gentiles from the nations, before the total and permanent salvation of Israel.

- So, is anything too difficult for the Lord? No
- Will the Lord sweep away the righteous with the wicked? No
- Will the judge of all the earth do what is right? Yes
- And no man is making Him do it!
- He works salvation by His own hand for His own name sake and He includes men and women who revere His name in His plans. Foremost, behind Christ, are Abraham & Sarah.
- May we be cut from the same quarry as this family.