

GENESIS 18: THE PROMISE AND THE PRAYER

I. OVERVIEW

- A. Three men appear to Abraham
 - i. One is the Lord
 - ii. Abraham invites them to his tent and feeds them
- B. The Lord promises that Sarah would have a child within a year
 - i. Sarah laughs in disbelief
 - ii. The Lord rebukes her
- C. The three men go towards Sodom
 - i. The Lord debates whether He should tell Abraham what He is about to do
 - ii. Two men go on to Sodom and the Lord stays behind to speak with Abraham
- D. Abraham intercedes for Sodom
 - i. Lot lives there in Sodom
 - ii. Abraham asks the Lord to spare the city for 50 righteous men
 - a. Then 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, then 10
 - iii. The Lord continues on to Sodom and Abraham returns to his tent

II. AND THE LORD APPEARED – V. 1

- A. No more than three months after events in ch. 17
 - i. Sarah was still not pregnant

III. WHEN HE SAW THEM – V. 2

- A. Abraham showed hospitality to the three men
 - i. Hebrews 13:2 ***Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.***
- B. He gave the men his best
 - i. Rest, shade, cakes, calf, milk

IV. BOWED HIMSELF TO THE EARTH – V. 2

- A. He recognized the men as his superiors¹
- B. He called him Lord - Adonai

V. ABRAHAM RAN TO THE HERD – V. 7

¹ Guzik, David. "Study Guide for Genesis 18." *Blue Letter Bible*, 2018, www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/genesis/genesis-18.cfm. Accessed 30 May 2023.

- A. Abraham and Sarah prepared everything themselves
 - i. Rather than commanding servants to do it²

VI. LAUGHED TO HERSELF – V. 12

- A. Quietly, inaudibly
 - i. But the Lord still heard

VII. SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON – V. 14

- A. God dealt with her unbelief rather than revoking the promise³

VIII. SHALL I HIDE FROM ABRAHAM WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO – V. 17

- A. Psalm 25:14 *The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.*
 - i. Friends share their plans and future dreams with each other
- B. Amos 3:7 *“For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.”*
 - i. The Lord does not judge cities or nations without telling the prophets first
 - a. To give people a chance to repent
- C. God gives three reasons why He decides to tell Abraham
 - i. He will become a great and mighty nation
 - ii. All nations of the earth will be blessed in him
 - iii. He is chosen to command his children and household to keep the way of the Lord
 - iv. Purpose is to prepare Abraham from what God has for him – how?

IX. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE – V. 19

- A. Righteousness
 - i. Mercy, love, blessing, always doing good
- B. Justice
 - i. Judgment, not overlooking sin, not allowing injustice⁴
- C. Abraham must learn the tension/consistency between these two characteristics of God
 - i. And how he will implement them on earth

X. OUTCRY IS GREAT – V. 20

- A. Like Abel’s blood crying from the ground

² Guzik

³ Guzik

⁴ Armstrong, Stephen. “Genesis 2011 - Lesson 18B.” *Verse by Verse Ministries International*, 13 Nov. 2011, versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_18b. Accessed 30 May 2023.

- B. Like man's sin before the flood
- C. Injustice cries out for justice

XI. I WILL GO DOWN – V. 21

- A. Like He did with the tower of Babel
- B. God doesn't judge without having intimate knowledge of the situation
 - i. Reveals His character and integrity⁵

XII. ABRAHAM STILL STOOD BEFORE THE LORD – V. 22

- A. As if to block Him from going further
- B. This is the position of an intercessor
 - i. He didn't ask just for the life of his nephew Lot
 - ii. He had compassion on the entire city⁶
 - a. Intercession requires and teaches compassion

XIII. WILL YOU INDEED SWEEP AWAY THE RIGHTEOUS WITH THE WICKED – V. 23

- A. Sodom was already judged by an unrighteous king
 - i. Abraham saved Lot through military means
- B. Now Sodom is about to be judged by the Righteous King
 - i. Only way for Lot to be saved is by Abraham appealing directly to the Lord

XIV. FIFTY RIGHTEOUS – V. 24

- A. Abraham prayed for something specific
- B. We should have the same specificity in our prayers⁷

XV. FAR BE IT FROM YOU TO DO SUCH A THING – V. 25

- A. Abraham appeals to God's nature
 - i. This is proper foundation of intercession
 - a. We must understand who God is and appeal to His nature

XVI. LET NOT THE LORD BE ANGRY – V. 30

- A. Abraham spoke with boldness but with humility⁸

XVII. SUPPOSE TEN ARE FOUND THERE – V. 32

- A. Abraham felt the weight of the impending judgment on this city
- B. Intercessors must bear the burden of what they are praying for

⁵ Guzik

⁶ Guzik

⁷ Guzik

⁸ Guzik

- i. Take responsibility for it

XVIII. POINTS TO JESUS

- A. God will “return” to Sarah this time next year
 - i. Double meaning
 - a. Isaac is the promised seed
 - b. Messiah will come through Isaac
- B. Jesus satisfies God’s righteousness and justice
- C. Jesus is the Great Intercessor
 - i. Hebrews 7:25 ***Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.***

XIX. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- A. How would we respond if God came walking up to our home? Would we respond with hospitality? What if we didn’t know it was God?

- B. Do we show hospitality to others the way we would show hospitality to God? (Ephesians 6:5-8)

- C. How does God reveal His righteousness? His justice?

- D. How can we reconcile the tension between God’s righteousness and justice?

E. Why did the Lord reveal His plans to Abraham? What was His purpose for Abraham?

F. Why does the Lord invite us to participate in His plans through intercession?

G. Why did Abraham continue to reduce the number of righteous that he was asking for in Sodom? What can we learn about intercession from this?

XX. FURTHER STUDY

A. What is the similarity between Abraham's request in verse 3 and Noah in Genesis 6:8? What does this say about Abraham's role in God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah?

B. What is the difference between Abraham's laugh in 17:17 and Sarah's laugh in 18:12? Why did God rebuke Sarah and not Abraham?

- C. What message is the author trying to tell us about Zechariah in Luke 1:18 when he uses the same language as Genesis 18:11-12?

- D. How can we position ourselves to hear the hidden things that are in God's heart? See Psalm 25:14 and John 15:15.

- E. What was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah? See Ezekiel 16:49-50 and Jude 7.

- F. What is an important function of an intercessor? See Psalm 106:23 and Jeremiah 18:20.

- G. What do righteous people do for an unrighteous city? See Isaiah 65:8; Jeremiah 5:1; Ezekiel 22:30.
