

Abraham's Meeting with God

Genesis 18:1-33

- I. ABRAHAM'S SERVICE TO GOD (Genesis 18:1-8)
 - A. The LORD Appeared at Abraham's Tent (Genesis 18:1-2)
 1. The place of the meeting
 - a. In the plains of Mamre (at Hebron) (Genesis 13:18)
 - b. In the tent
 2. The time of the meeting
 - a. In the heat of the day
 - b. People would commonly seek shelter in the heat of the day because of the extremely hot climate. In doing so, they would eat a noon time meal (Genesis 43:16). At times, they would even use this time to rest or take a nap (see 2 Samuel 4:5).
 3. The guest of the meeting
 - a. One of these men is a preincarnate appearance of the LORD (a Theophany).
 - (1) All caps LORD means Jehovah, and the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament, cp. Isaiah 43:11 with Luke 2:11).
 - (2) There are some that theorize that the Trinity is represented here because of the mention of the "*three men*" in verse number 2, however, the other two men are identified as angels (cp. Genesis 18:22 with Genesis 19:1).
 - (3) This visit by the LORD and the two angels has prompted the New Testament exhortation of Hebrews 13:2, "*Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*" (Hebrews 13:2).
 - b. After talking with Abraham (Genesis 18:22), two of the men went to Sodom while the Lord remained with Abraham. Later (Genesis 18:33), the LORD went on His way. The two angels came to Sodom at evening time (Genesis 19:1).
 - B. The Swiftiness of Abraham's Service (Genesis 18:3-5)
 1. Abraham asked the men to stay awhile (Genesis 18:3).
 2. He offered his hospitality (Genesis 18:4-5a).

3. He saw his hospitality as the purpose of their visit (Genesis 18:5) – “*for therefore are ye come to your servant.*”
 - a. When the Lord appeared unto Abraham, he quickly recognized his duty and “*ran*” to meet them.
 - b. Their “*stood by him*” involves standing at a distance—far enough away so he could run to them. In those days this standing a short distance off was the equivalent of knocking on the door today.
 - c. The swiftness in his service is seen later in other verses by “*hastened*” (Genesis 18:6) and “*ran*” (Genesis 18:7). His command to Sarah to get the food ready “*quickly*” (Genesis 18:6) reinforces this emphasis of the importance of being swift in taking care of his guests (the LORD).
4. The men agreed to stay (Genesis 18:5).
5. The importance of hospitality
 - a. Guests
 - (1) Guests were always desired; eating alone was disliked (Job 31:17).
 - (2) Guests were believed to be sent by God; a wandering stranger was treated like an invited guest (Genesis 18:2-8; Hebrews 13:2; Romans 12:13).
 - (3) Guests came under the protection of the host; it was a great evil to betray this duty (Genesis 19:4-8).
 - (4) Additionally, it was also a terrible evil for any guest to betray his host (Psalm 41:9; Obadiah 1:7; John 13:18).
 - b. Customs upon entering a house
 - (1) Bowing—used to show a readiness to serve, to express thanksgiving, to ask for a favour; also an act of worship
 - (2) Kissing
 - (a) Kissing the cheeks was a custom greeting (Genesis 27:27; Genesis 33:4; Genesis 45:15; Genesis 48:10; Exodus 4:27; Exodus 18:7; 1 Samuel 20:41; Luke 15:20; Acts 20:37).
 - (b) Used as a familiar greeting among friends (Luke 7:45)
 - (3) Removing the shoes
 - (a) Shoes were removed when entering a house.
 - (b) Shoes touching the ground were deemed defiled (Exodus 3:5).
 - (4) Washing the feet
 - (a) Water was offered to guests to wash their feet (Genesis 18:4; Genesis 19:2; Genesis 24:32; Genesis 43:24; 1 Samuel 25:41).
 - (b) A servant would wash the feet of the guest (John 13:4-5).
 - (c) This was a test of hospitality (Luke 7:44; 1 Timothy 5:10).
 - (5) Anointing the head with oil—often done to refresh the guest (Psalm 23:5; Luke 7:46)
 - (6) Giving a drink of water (Genesis 24:17-18; Mark 9:41)
 - c. Taking care of the guests

- (1) The guest was made lord of the house (Genesis 19:2).
- (2) The guest was not left alone at any time.
- (3) The guest was served a meal (Genesis 18:5-8).
 - (a) The meal was a covenant of peace and trust (Genesis 26:30).
 - (b) The meal was entered with care (Genesis 24:33; Joshua 9:14).

C. Abraham and Sarah Prepared a Meal for Their Guests (Genesis 18:6-8)

D. Abraham's Steadfastness in His Service (Genesis 18:8)

1. Abraham's posture
 - a. While he had already served his guests, he was ready at any moment to meet their smallest need if they had one.
 - b. Standing by them meant he was ready to give more service if they requested it (Zechariah 4:11-14; cp. Revelation 4:11; Deuteronomy 10:8; Luke 1:19).
2. Abraham's stamina
 - a. He would stick to his service until his guests had left.
 - b. So many start out with great energy, yet soon they cool off and quit.
 - c. Not Abraham, he was steadfast in his service to the very end (Philippians 4:1; 2 Timothy 2:15).

II. SARAH'S PROMISE FROM GOD (Genesis 18:9-15)

A. The Lord Renewed His Promise (Genesis 18:9-10)

1. The men inquired of Sarah (Genesis 18:9)
2. The announcement of the coming birth (Genesis 18:10) – The message of the coming son was three-fold.
 - a. The certainty of the son – *"I will certainly return unto thee"* – When God promises, it is as certain as anything can possibly be.
 - b. The calendar and the son – *"according to the time of life"* – We learned in the previous chapter of Genesis that the time was in about a year; the time was fast approaching.
 - c. The capability for the son – *"It ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women."* – A miracle was needed for the son to arrive. So, this informed both Abraham and Sarah of the mighty power of God.

B. The Laughter About the Son (Genesis 18:11-12)

1. Sarah had ceased from the manner of women (Genesis 18:11).
2. Sarah laughed within herself (Genesis 18:12).
 - a. This laughter was one of disbelief.
 - b. The limiting of God's power because of the disbelief.

- (1) It would indeed take the power of God to bring about the birth of Isaac.
- (2) However, Sarah did not believe God had that kind of power.
- (3) She viewed the circumstances bigger than the power of God (Matthew 13:53-58; Hebrews 3:12-19). That problem is still an issue with many of us today.

C. The Declaration of the Lord's Power (Genesis 18:13-15)

1. He challenged Sarah's laughter (Genesis 18:13; cp. Psalm 44:21; Mark 2:8).
 - a. He dealt with Abraham concerning the doubting of Sarah.
 - b. He questioned the motive of Sarah's laughter.
2. He declared His ability (Genesis 18:14).
 - a. He challenged with a question concerning His power.
 - b. He followed with certain promises.
3. Sarah Denied her laughter (Genesis 18:15).
 - a. A personal offense, encouraged by Abraham (Genesis 12:13).
 - (1) The cause of her lying – "*She was afraid.*" Note: Unbelief does not produce courage, but it does produce fear.
 - (2) The contradiction of her lying – "*Nay; but thou didst laugh.*"
 - (a) This reminds us that at the Great White Throne Judgment, God will have all the facts.
 - (b) At that judgment when a person tries to deny or excuse their sin, God can contradict it quickly and easily.
 - b. A universal offense for mankind (Genesis 4:9; Proverbs 28:13; Colossians 3:9; 1 John 1:8).

III. SODOM'S PENDING JUDGMENT (Genesis 18:16-22)

A. The Courtesy of Abraham (Genesis 18:16)

1. The men rose up to leave.
2. Abraham walked a distance down the road with his guests to see them on their way.

B. The question of revealing the pending judgment (Genesis 18:17-19).

1. The Lord's inner dialogue
 - a. "*Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;*"
 - b. "*Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation*"
2. The Lord's knowledge of Abraham
 - a. Abraham will become a great nation

- b. All the nations of the earth will be blessed in him.
 - c. *“For I know him (Abraham)”* (Genesis 18:19; John 10:14; John 21:17; 2 Timothy 2:19; cp. Isaiah 66:1-2)
 - (1) *“That he will command his children and his household”*
(Deuteronomy 11:18-21; Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15)
 - (2) That *“they shall keep the way of the LORD”*
 - (3) *“to do justice and judgment.”*
- C. The plan concerning the pending judgment (Genesis 18:20-22)
- 1. The reason for the pending judgment (Genesis 18:20; Ezekiel 16:49-50).
 - a. Because of the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great (Genesis 4:10; Genesis 19:13; cp. Exodus 32:18; Isaiah 5:7).
 - b. Because their sin is very grievous (Isaiah 3:9).
 - 2. The investigation of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:21-22).
- IV. ABRAHAM'S SUPPLICATION TO GOD (Genesis 18:23-33)
- A. Abraham's Plea for Fifty Righteous Persons (Genesis 18:23-26)
- 1. The concern for the righteous by Abraham (Genesis 18:23)
 - 2. His plea for fifty righteous (Genesis 18:24)
 - 3. His confidence in the justness of God (Genesis 18:25)
 - a. He is the Rock; His work is perfect (Deuteronomy 32:4).
 - b. The LORD trieth the righteous (Psalm 11:5-7).
 - c. The reward for the righteous (Psalm 58:11).
 - d. The Lord comes to judge the earth (Psalm 98:9).
 - e. The Son will judge all things (John 5:22-27; cp. Acts 17:31).
 - f. The believer will be judged by the Son (2 Corinthians 5:10).
 - 4. God's promise to spare Sodom for fifty righteous (Genesis 18:26)
- B. Abraham's Negotiations with God From Forty-Five to Ten (Genesis 18:27-33)
- 1. Abraham's plea for forty-five righteous (Genesis 18:27-28)
 - 2. Abraham's plea for forty righteous (Genesis 18:29)
 - 3. Abraham's plea for thirty righteous (Genesis 18:30)
 - 4. Abraham's plea for twenty righteous (Genesis 18:31)
 - 5. Abraham's plea for ten righteous (Genesis 18:32)
 - a. The likely assumption by Abraham. Note: Abraham was likely assuming that Lot and his family would make up the ten righteous.
 - b. The reality of the righteousness of Lot and his family (Genesis 19:12-15).
 - 6. The Lord went on His way (Genesis 18:33).