

The LORD'S Visit With Abraham

Genesis 18

The LORD'S Presence

Genesis 18:1-8

Abraham's Visitors: *Genesis 18:1-5*

Abraham's Recognition

Abraham sat in the door of his tent at noontime, this being the customary time for relaxation and the main meal. As he gazed over the land, three travelers suddenly appeared before him. Abraham immediately ran and fell down before the visitors, obviously understanding they were more than normal men. Though he was nearing 100 years of age, he was filled with enthusiasm in the presence of these travelers. Abraham was blessed to be in the company of three spiritual beings.

1. *The leader was the LORD* – He was called Jehovah, which is the name of God and in the course of conversation promises were made that only God could keep (Genesis 18:10-14). He also separated Himself from the other two when dealing with Abraham (Genesis 18:16).
2. *The other two beings were angels* – which is confirmed at the beginning of the next chapter (Genesis 19:1). Evidently, the LORD is able to present His angels as men (Hebrews 13:2).

Abraham's Reception

Abraham did not expect the LORD but was ready when He appeared. Abraham eagerly invited his visitors to remain for a while and relax. He asked permission to wash their feet and offered them a place to rest. Washing of the guest's feet was customary during this time because traveler's feet would become dirty from the dusty roads.

Abraham also encouraged his guests to partake in a meal. To him, it was a great honor to be in the LORD'S presence. Each of us will stand before God some day (Hebrews 9:27). For those that belong to Him it will be a wonderful blessing, like Abraham's experience. But for those that reject the LORD it will be a time of judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). It is best to prepare now for that meeting with God by trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation (John 14:6).

Abraham's Hospitality: *Genesis 18:6-8*

The Meal Prepared

Abraham hurriedly found Sarah and directed her to make cakes, or bread. Without argument or complaint, Sarah immediately began to prepare the meal. As she went about making the bread, Abraham ran to his herd, picked a good calf, and assigned a young man to quickly prepare it. He then grabbed the butter, milk, cooked meat, and set the table. Abraham and Sarah worked together, one cooked the bread and the other took care of the meat and furnishings. The problem in many homes

today is selfishness, neither one willing to help the other, instead both want their own way. When this occurs there will be numerous problems within the home.

Abraham's actions provide us a good example of service. He did all within his power to be a blessing to his guests. The LORD deserves our best, whether it's our possessions or time.

1. *The work was done promptly* – there was no delay or hesitation but all was done with a sense of urgency.
2. *The work was done properly* – it was done completely and without complaint.

The Meal Served

Abraham personally served the meal, which consisted of butter, milk, bread, and calf steaks. The meal was simple and wholesome and they ate under the shade of a tree. Many would look down upon a meal like that today, but it was good enough for the LORD. God has more interest in our heart's condition than our earthly possessions.

Abraham stood by as a servant while the meal was eaten. He watched as they enjoyed the food and was ready to assist if necessary. Keep in mind, there is nobody too good to be a servant (Galatians 5:13). The LORD was gracious, He was not in need of a meal but accepted what Abraham and Sarah prepared and offered.

The LORD'S Promise *Genesis 18:9-15*

Sarah's Surprise: Genesis 18:9-10

The Presence of Sarah

The LORD inquired about Sarah. It was a personal question concerning Abraham's family, implying that the LORD was concerned with Sarah as well as Abraham. He was told that Sarah was in the tent, being customary for women not to eat with strangers.

The Promise Confirmed

The LORD confirmed the promise He had already given, Sarah would have a son. He never changed His mind, or plan, and continued to work, even though it appeared the promise was delayed. Abraham and Sarah had to continue by faith.

The LORD also confirmed their part in His plan. They had stumbled in attempting to help God and may have wondered if the LORD would still work through them. This was a reminder that God was faithful and would keep His word. Sarah listened from inside the door of the tent and heard exactly what God wanted her to hear.

Sarah's Lack of Faith: Genesis 18:11-15

Sarah Focused on the Situation

Upon hearing the promise confirmed, Sarah immediately thought of the physical elements of this world and concluded it was unbelievable or even impossible. Abraham and Sarah were both old and beyond the childbearing years. She based her decision on what was seen and known instead of trusting the LORD. Sarah forgot that with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

In her mind, the fact was so incredibly unrealistic; she laughed. It was laughter of doubting and mistrust. Because the promise seemed ridiculous, Sarah lacked faith in God. The LORD heard Sarah's laughter and addressed her disbelief. Notice, the LORD knew she laughed and why, nothing can be hidden from Him (Psalm 139:2). He challenged her with a question, is anything too hard for the LORD? The LORD got directly to the point, He promised to give her a son; His word is what she doubted. In light of their circumstances, they were to consider the LORD'S greatness. There is no obstacle too great for Him to overcome.

Sarah Was Reproved

Sarah immediately denied laughing but it was useless because the LORD knew her heart. He heard her laugh and was aware of the doubts within. Sarah may have appeared correct on the outside but on the inside was filled with disbelief. This unbelief within her heart led to another sin, after laughing in disbelief she lied to cover it up. The sin of disbelief opens the door for many other sins to enter in.

Sarah's mistake was made known, with the LORD confirming that she did laugh. This was a humbling moment for Sarah and from this point on it appears that she had faith in the LORD'S promise (Hebrews 11:11). Sarah laughed and then lied directly to God but witnessed His patience and mercy (Psalm 130:3-4). Her lack of faith was forgiven and she was blessed.

The LORD'S Plan Genesis 18:16-33

Made Known to Abraham: Genesis 18:16-22

The LORD Considered Abraham

The LORD and His angels left for Sodom, turning their attention towards the wicked cities of the plain. Abraham walked with his guests; as one who did not want to see them go, perhaps that is why he was blessed (Proverbs 13:20). The LORD stopped to converse with Abraham while the two angels continued towards the sinful cities (Psalms 25:14; Proverbs 3:32).

The LORD knew Abraham would become great and the nations of the world would be blessed through him. This was due to God's grace and mercy. The LORD also knew Abraham would command his family and lead correctly. In our society, commanding is not considered proper parenting. Too many

parents want to be the fun friend instead of the responsible adult. So children are left to direct themselves and the result is immature people that live to gratify the flesh. Instead, let's command our children to live correctly and lead them after the LORD. Abraham's teaching of his children was a deciding factor in whether God's knowledge would be given to him or not. Many have lost sight of the importance of teaching their children, so our nation is overrun with disrespectful and immoral young people. To the point, it is surprising and refreshing to find respectable young men and women. Our youth believes immorality defines maturity, in reality immorality displays the depravity of the heart. Parents, your children are a gift from God and you should do your best to raise them after the LORD, instead of allowing the world to have them. Abraham lived unto God, commanded his family, and found himself with God when judgment came.

The LORD Informed Abraham

The LORD planned to visit the wicked cities because their sin was grievous and cried unto Him. All sin is terrible because it opposes God but some sin cries out louder than others (1 John 3:4). The cities were filled with immorality but the sin that cried unto God for judgment was homosexuality (Jude 1:7). Contrary to popular opinion, it is a gross and burdensome sin that has no benefit. It is a burden too heavy for any society to successfully carry because it produces hatred and oppression, notice how aggressive and intolerant the homosexual movement has become today. They demand acceptance and those that disagree are immediately labeled as being filled with hate.

The LORD would visit the cities and make His decision. He never acts on a whim, but all is done with thought and care. Judgment comes for a reason; He is not cruel but fairly delivers that which is deserved. It may appear that the LORD disregards the sins of a nation but the day will come when He looks upon the guilty offenders. If a nation rejects God and His blessings in favor of sin and immorality, at some point the LORD will turn His attention towards that country and act accordingly. There is no nation above God's authority or beyond His reach.

Made Certain to Abraham: *Genesis 18:23-33*

Abraham's Boldness

Abraham drew near and addressed the LORD; the closer we are to God the more we will talk to Him. His request concerned the souls and not the sin. He asked for mercy on behalf of the righteous, those that belonged to God but foolishly lived near the world. He probably had Lot and his family in mind. Abraham spoke to the LORD but refrained from meddling.

1. *Abraham did not pry for more information* – he was content with what God had shared and acted based upon his knowledge.
2. *Abraham did not attempt to persuade God* - he knew better than to go against God's plan and was aware of the extent of the wickedness. He prayed God would be merciful to the righteous.

Abraham's Prayer

Abraham went by faith trusting God would act correctly. Many believe a righteous and loving God will not execute judgment, but they are incorrect. It is because of His righteousness that He will punish sinners. The LORD will give each sinner what is deserved and earned (Romans 6:23). It is because of His love that He provided a way for sinners to be forgiven (John 3:16). The world is deluded when it comes to sin, believing it not to be as bad as it really is. They do not believe judgment is coming because they do not comprehend the seriousness of their sin and fail to recognize the great offense sin is to God.

Believing the LORD to be just, he humbly approached Him with his request. He asked if the LORD would spare the city for fifty righteous people. Abraham based his request on the LORD'S righteousness; he knew the LORD would do what was correct and not judge the righteous with the wicked. The LORD answered with a yes, and Abraham continued to lower the number of the righteous required to spare the city until he concluded his request with ten. Why ten, perhaps Abraham counted the ones he believed were righteous and concluded there were at least that many. The entire time Abraham remained humble and reverent, never directing the LORD but asking with respect. It is interesting to note, that Abraham stopped asking before the LORD stopped giving. Abraham had faith that God would do what was right and God did. The LORD being good and gracious would not punish the righteous with the wicked.

Conclusion

The LORD blessed Abraham with a personal visit and Abraham responded with hospitality. During this time God confirmed His promise concerning Isaac and shared His plan for the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Allowed to speak boldly, Abraham's prayer was heard and answered. Today, God is not surprised or overcome by your doubts or fears. He is ready and willing to hear your prayers, and His salvation enables you to approach Him like Abraham did, *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16*

Point to Ponder

The Word of the LORD challenges the heart to pray.

Quote

"No one can perform well for God who does not live close to God." John G. Butler

Questions

How were Abraham's guests treated?

Why did Sarah laugh?

Why did God share His plan with Abraham?

How did Abraham approach the LORD?

What new truth have you learned from this lesson?