

### The Lord Heard Abraham Plead for Sodom

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to know that they can depend on all of the promises of God. We saw that the Lord had corrected Sarah when she failed to believe the promise that she would give birth to a son. In our topic today, we will see that God then told Abraham that the city of Sodom was very evil and that it would soon be judged.

In Genesis 18:16-21, we read, “Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. And the Lord said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.’ And the Lord said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.’” In the next chapter, we will see that the two men with the Lord are actually angels.

Abraham walked with the Lord and the two others as they started on their way after Abraham had served them a meal. They were walking toward the location of the city of Sodom. As they walked, the Lord spoke to the angels and asked them the following question, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?” This question shows that Christ asks the angels questions to help them learn and understand why the Lord does what He does. With this question, Christ revealed to the angels what was going to happen to the descendants of Abraham in the future. Christ told or reminded the angels that He was going to make a great and mighty nation from Abraham. In fact, all of the nations of the earth would be blessed through the descendants of Abraham, especially through Christ.

Christ showed that He knows all of us completely. He knew what Abraham had done in the past. He knew that Abraham would command and instruct his children and that this same thing would happen to the following generations. He also knew that the family of Abraham would keep the way of the Lord. The word translated “way” means the *road, path, godly character, or course of life*. Christ said that this meant there would also continue to be those who walked in righteousness and justice in the family of Abraham. God later told Elijah, in 1 Kings 19:18, “‘Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.’” The Lord has always kept a godly remnant among the family of Abraham.

Then, the Lord told Abraham that the sin and wickedness of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were so great that the men were personally on their way to see just how sinful these cities really were. The second word translated “outcry” means *a cry of distress that is heard by God*. God had heard and now they were going to confirm what God had heard. Genesis 18:22-26 goes on to say, “Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. And Abraham came near and said, ‘Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare

*it* for the fifty righteous that were in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’ So the Lord said, ‘If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.’”

The two men (angels) with Christ then turned and started to walk toward the city of Sodom. Meanwhile, Abraham and Christ were still standing there together. Abraham had rescued Lot and his family along with the people of Sodom, so Abraham knew that the city was very evil. However, Abraham came close to the Lord and began to make his request to spare the city. Abraham had a great love and compassion for Lot and his family, as well as for any others who were righteous in that city. The word translated “righteous” means *those who are declared just and right before God* because they have come to God in repentance and faith. This word was used to describe Noah, in Genesis 6:9, where we read, “This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.” In this verse, the word is translated “just.”

Abraham believed that Lot and his family were righteous before God and that there were probably at least a few others who were also righteous. Abraham wanted to know if God would destroy the righteous with the wicked. God had destroyed the wicked in the time of Noah, but He had preserved Noah and his family because they were righteous. Abraham asked God if He would destroy the city if there were fifty righteous people in the city. Then, Abraham explained that he understood the character of the Lord. Twice, Abraham used the phrase, “Far be it from You.” This phrase means *God forbid or let it not be*. He said it was not the character of God to destroy the righteous with the wicked.

Abraham also recognized that the Lord is the true Judge and He will do what is right. This is important to help people understand. 1 John 1:5 says, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” This means that what God does will always be right because He has no darkness within Him. The Lord responded to the request of Abraham by saying that if He found fifty people who were righteous living within the city of Sodom, He would spare the entire city for the sake of those fifty. Since God is light and knows all things, it also meant that He knew the hearts of every person in the city and would judge righteously.

Abraham was not sure if there were even fifty righteous people in the city. As a result, Genesis 18:27-33 goes on to tell us, “Then Abraham answered and said, ‘Indeed now, I who *am but* dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for *lack of five*?’ So He said, ‘If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it*.’ And he spoke to Him yet again and said, ‘Suppose there should be forty found there?’ So He said, ‘I will not do *it* for the sake of forty.’ Then he said, ‘Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?’ So He said, ‘I will not do *it* if I find thirty there.’ And he said, ‘Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?’ So He said, ‘I will not destroy *it* for the sake of twenty.’ Then he said, ‘Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?’ And He said, ‘I will not destroy *it* for the sake of ten.’ So the Lord went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.” Here, we see that Abraham asked the Lord to show mercy to a smaller number.

Abraham realized that there might be few righteous other than Lot and his family in the city of

Sodom. This caused him to plead with God to show mercy even though there might be a much smaller number of righteous. God showed His mercy in the time of Noah by waiting to bring judgment until Noah had completed the ark. 1 Peter 3:20 says that God gave time for the people to repent in the days of Noah, “who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.” However, the day did come when God brought judgment on the earth. In the time of Jonah, God waited one hundred years to judge the city of Ninevah when the generation living at the time of Jonah did repent. Here, we see that God was willing to spare the city of Sodom if the angels found just a small group of righteous people.

The Lord is a Lord of great compassion. Matthew 9:36-38 says, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” Here, we see Christ showed that compassion during the time He was on the earth. 2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” That was why the Lord was willing to spare the entire city, even if there were only ten righteous people in the city.

Abraham probably thought that between the family of Lot and the husbands of the daughters who were married, there would be at least ten who would be righteous because they were followers of the Lord. 2 Peter 2:6-9 says, “and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day today by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)—*then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.” We will see that the Lord did show mercy and rescued Lot and two of his daughters. However, Lot had not had a positive impact on any of the other people of Sodom.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to pray and intercede to God for those who are not yet Christians - that the Holy Spirit will convict the lost and the Father will draw them because the Son is seeking and saving the lost. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to have this same kind of compassion.