

The Book of Genesis

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Hospitality for Heavenly Visitors

- I. The Hospitality of Abraham (Genesis 18:1-8)
- A. One day, Abraham was visited by three men.
 - 1. The heat of the day refers to the time around noon or shortly after.
 - 2. Two of these visitors were angels, though Abraham did not know it (19:1; cf. Heb. 13:2).
 - 3. The other was the Lord Jehovah (18:1, 13, 17).
 - B. Abraham showed great hospitality to these weary travelers.
 - 1. vs. 3 – He invited them to stay with him.
 - 2. vs. 4 – He offered them water and a place to rest.
 - 3. vs. 5 – He provided them with food – bread, meat, butter, and milk (vs. 6-8).
 - C. Christians are to practice this kind of hospitality as a demonstration of brotherly love (Heb. 13:1-2; Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:8-11).
 - D. Note that Abraham acted this way even though he did not know who these men were.
 - 1. God had promised that Abraham would bless “all families of the earth” (12:3).
 - 2. Thus, Abraham sought to do good unto all men.
 - 3. By choosing Abraham, God was not excluding the rest of humanity from His love or salvation.
 - 4. The Jews came to misunderstand this, thinking that God only loved them – leading to their hatred of the Gentiles.
- II. The Laughter of Sarah (Genesis 18:9-15)
- A. The men asked about Abraham’s wife, Sarah – indicating that they were more than merely men.
 - B. Then the Lord made a promise to Abraham that Sarah would bear him a son “according to the time of life.”
 - 1. This may have meant in one year’s time (cf. 17:21; 2 Kin. 4:16-17).
 - 2. Or it may refer to the timeframe of Sarah’s pregnancy.
 - C. Because she was barren, old, and now post-menopausal, Sarah laughed internally at God’s promise – a laugh of doubt and unbelief.
 - D. Though this laugh was not out loud, the Lord was aware of it and asked why she had laughed.
 - E. His question is direct and powerful – “Is anything too hard for Jehovah?”
 - F. Sarah denied laughing, but the Lord declared, “Nay, but thou didst laugh.” {Nothing can be hidden from the Lord.}
- III. The Announcement of Judgment (Genesis 18:16-22)
- A. Following this exchange, the men focused their attention on a problem they had come to confront – the sin of Sodom.
 - B. Abraham escorted them on their way to the city in another act of hospitality.
 - C. The Lord spoke favorably of Abraham and determined to inform him of the coming judgment upon Sodom.
 - 1. God would not hide his judgment and punishment of sinners from Abraham.

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2. Abraham and his descendants needed to know and understand both the goodness and severity of God.
 3. God declared that He knew Abraham – as He knows all of His children (cf. 2 Sam. 7:20; Psa. 1:6; 11:4; John 10:14; 21:17; 2 Tim. 2:19).
 4. He also knew and approved of the character of Abraham – stating his influence upon his household and descendants for generations to come.
 - a. All men should strive to have such an influence in their homes.
 - b. Yet, Abraham’s character and actions would impact generations – all the way to the present!
 - c. In Jesus’ day, the Jews were still clinging and appealing to “father Abraham” (John 8:33, 39, 53, 58; cf. Luke 16:24, 30; 19:9).
 - d. Even today, Christians have the “faith of Abraham” (Rom. 4:12, 16), are the children of Abraham (Gal. 3:6-9), and inherit the promise of Abraham (Gal. 3:26-29).
 5. For Abraham to have the proper influence, he must understand both the mercy and the justice of Jehovah.
- D. God informed Abraham that the sin of Sodom was “very grievous” – meaning, “heavy, weighty, or grave.”
- E. Thus, God personified Himself as a man and stated His plan to go and see if this were truly the case. *{Remember that God is omniscient. He already knew the truth of the situation in Sodom. He is emphasizing that His actions are always just because they are based upon truth.}*

IV. The Conversation with Jehovah

(Genesis 18:23-33)

- A. Abraham asked an important question: Will God destroy the righteous with the wicked?
- B. He answered himself by asking another question: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
 1. Of course, God is righteous and will only do that which is right.
 2. Therefore, He will not punish the righteous for the sins of the wicked (cf. Psa. 11:4-7; Eze. 18:20; 2 Pet. 2:9).
 3. In fact, God is merciful and He will often spare the wicked due to the presence and influence of the righteous.
- C. Thus, Abraham entered into a conversation with God to determine how many righteous it would take to result in the preservation of the cities of the plain.
 1. Starting at 50, the number was eventually brought down to 10.
 2. If ten righteous souls were found in Sodom God would not destroy it.
- D. It is important to understand that Abraham’s pleas to God were based upon his understanding of God’s righteous nature.
 1. He was not asking God to overlook sin.
 2. He was not asking God to spare the wicked.
 3. He was not asking God to act outside of His divine will.
 4. Our prayers must be offered in the same way with the same understanding.
- E. Note that Abraham prayed to God with boldness, but also with humility.
- F. Notice that Abraham shared the same love for the lost as God did – desiring their salvation, whether they were his people or strangers (Gentiles).
- G. Their conversation ended, the Lord separated from Abraham and Abraham returned home.