

## The Father of Nations:

A Study of Abraham

**Lesson Seven:** The hospitality of the Father of Nations—Genesis 18

August 9, 2020

*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.*  
**Hebrews 13:2**

*And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*  
**Matthew 19:26**

**Opening Illustration:** "I'll believe it when I see it." Many Christians are sometimes a little skittish about certain things in the Bible...things that are "impossible". Some find these things not only impossible...but laughable. Really, though, in light of what we claim to believe, can we really ever think that God would be limited by the possible?

### I. Introduction/Review

### II. Don't pass your servant by! (vv. 1-8)

#### A. What happened?

1. Three men appeared to Abraham near his tent.
  - a) One of these men was the LORD.
    - (1) The word here "LORD" is the Hebrew name "YHWH." This is the covenant name of God.
  - b) The other 2 men were angels.
    - (1) Compare Genesis 19:1
2. Abraham sprung to action in order to extend the expected hospitality toward his guests.
  - a) We are not told whether or not Abraham recognized the "man" as "the LORD".
3. Key statement: Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, please let me serve you.
  - a) Abraham saw it as a great privilege to serve them.

#### B. What did Abraham promise?

1. He promised a little water to wash their feet.
2. He promised a little shade in which to rest.
3. He promised a piece of bread to refresh them and relieve their hunger.
4. They received his hospitality (v. 5)
  - a) "His visitors accepted his hospitality to prove to him that this was no more vision or dream."

#### C. What did Abraham provide?

1. 3 seahs worth of bread—One seah equals about 11 quarts. This is quite a bit for 3 people!
2. Milk and cottage cheese (or yogurt) and even veal!
3. In essence, Abraham provided a feast.

#### D. Is there a point here? Under promise and over deliver?

1. A contrast between the hospitality Abraham shows in chapter 18 with the lack of hospitality shown by Sodom and Gomorrah in chapter 19.
2. It could be that this was meant to show that God would over-abundantly supply Abraham, way more than what He promised. Granted, this may be reading a bit into the text. We have to be careful, here.

### III. Is anything too difficult for the Lord? (vv. 9-15)

#### A. Where is Sarah, your wife?

1. Why ask this? Why even bring her up?
2. What does the Lord say about Sarah? Within a year, she will have a baby

**B. Why is this impossible? (v. 11)**

1. Sarah was already past the time of childbearing.

**C. How did she respond? She laughed (v. 12)**

1. Did she laugh “to” herself or “within” herself?
2. Was her laugh sinful or just uncomfortable?
  - a) “Her laugh was clearly derisive, suggesting that Abraham either had not told her the promise (17:6, 19) or failed to convince her that it could be kept.”<sup>1</sup>

**D. The Lord’s rebuke of Sarah**

1. The Lord asked her why she laughed.
2. The Lord corrected her when she tried to deny it.
3. The Lord reaffirmed the truthfulness of His promise.
  - a) “Note that Sarah’s unbelief does not abort or sidetrack, or slow down the promise of God. She will still conceive, whether she thinks she can or not.”<sup>2</sup>

**E. What is the point of this?**

1. God seemed to wait UNTIL this was impossible before He fulfilled His promise.
  - a) Why would He do this?

**IV. Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? (vv. 16-21)**

**A. Why would the Lord share this with Abraham?**

1. He will become a great nation
2. In him all the nations of the world would be blessed.
3. For the Lord chose him! (v. 19)

**B. What was the message/issue? (v. 20)**

1. The outcry is great.
  - a) Who is crying out?
    - (1) The good people in Sodom and Gomorrah?
    - (2) Lot—This is possible, but I think the Lord would have just said that.
    - (3) Tourists—I think that this is the most likely option in light of what happens in chapter 19.
2. Their sin is grave—We will get back to this next week.

**V. Shall not the judge of all the Earth deal justly? (vv. 22-32)**

**A. What’s really the issue here?**

1. The character of Sodom and Gomorrah is clear.
2. What about God’s character?
  - a) Would He be hasty in His judgements?
  - b) Would He punish the righteous right along with the wicked?

**B. What do we learn from this?**

1. The character of God is uncompromised in how He deals with Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. The Lord is not simply wiping them out. He will make sure that everything is as it seems.

**VI. What are our Conclusions?**

**A. God is not limited by anything we may consider impossible.**

**B. God is righteous even in the punishment of the wicked.**

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<sup>1</sup> John J. Davis, “Paradise to Prison” page 198

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton, “Genesis 18-50” NICOT page 14