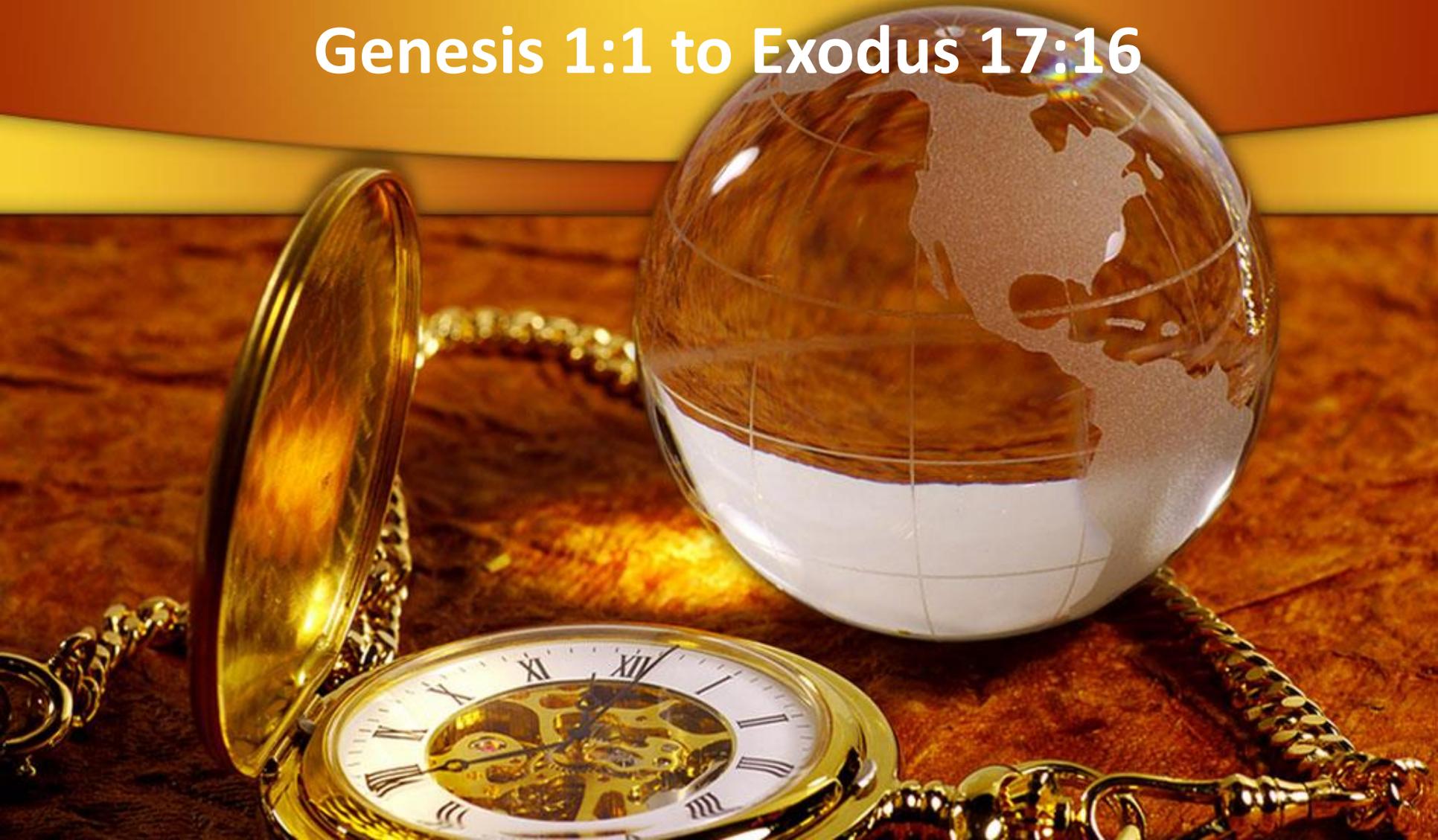
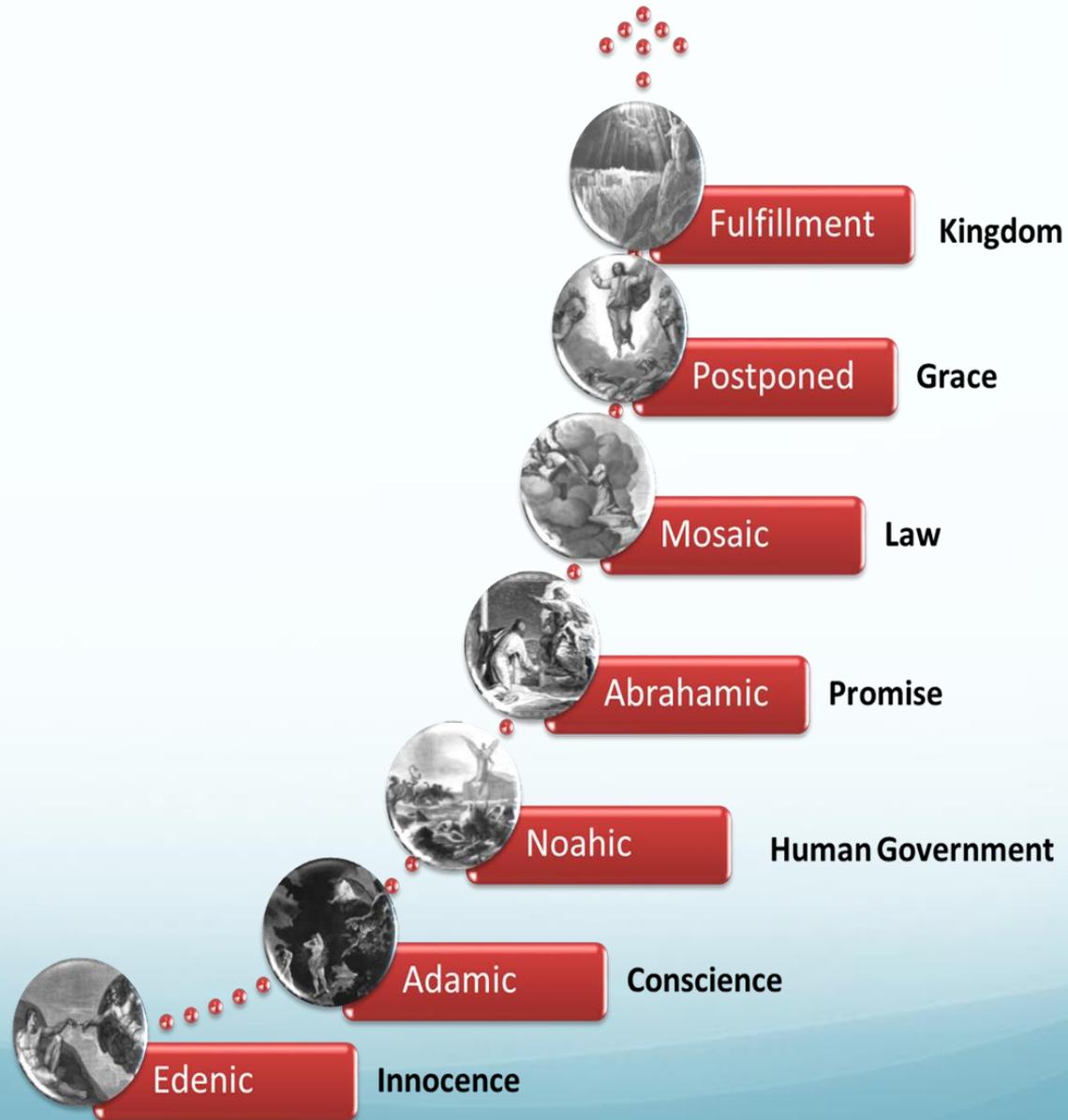


# From God's Creation to God's Nation

Genesis 1:1 to Exodus 17:16



# Review of Covenants in the Bible & Dispensations



# Abrahamic Covenant

**ABRAHAMIC**  
**Genesis**  
**15**

**LAND**

**SEED**

**BLESSING**

**LAND**  
**Deuteronomy**  
**29-30**

**DAVIDIC**  
**2 Samuel**  
**7:12-16**

**NEW**  
**Jeremiah**  
**31:31-34**



*Unconditional* covenant with a conditional blessing (Deut. 28; Lev. 26)

# Quick Review of Ch. 17

- The Lord appears to Abram with a command & 6 “I wills” & Abram name change 17:1-8
- The Lord gives the sign of the covenant 17: 9-14
- The Lord pronounces to Abram Sarai’s name change & explain and name the progeny YHWH will establish covenant through 17: 15-22
- The Lord’s instructions obediently carried out by Abraham 17:23-27

# Chapter 18 Audio



# Genesis 18 Outline

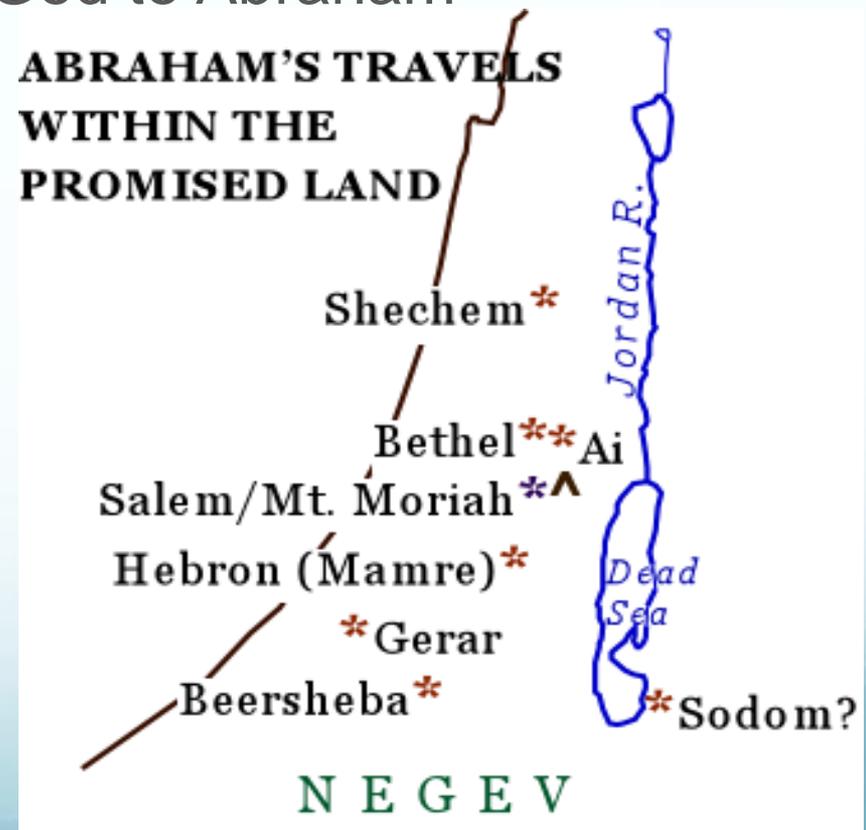
- I. The Lord & 2 Angels appear to Abraham by Oaks of Mamre 18:1-15
  - A. Abraham recognition of theophany & offered reverence & hospitality (vv.1-8)
  - B. A Divine reaffirmation/announcement & Sarah's reaction (vv. 9-15)
- II. The Lord turns toward Sodom & informs Abraham 18:16-22
  - A. The “men” turn toward Sodom & Lord decides to disclose to Abraham (vv. 16-19)
  - B. The Lord's proclamation to Abraham about Sodom (vv. 20-22)
- III. Abraham's plea & negotiations with the Lord 18:23-33
  - A. Abraham's initial reasonable plea to the Lord (v. 23)
  - B. Abraham's propositions & YHWH's reactions (vv. 24-33)

# Introductory Comments on *Chapter 18*

- YHWH continues His intimate relationship and communication with Abraham
- YHWH by revealing His intentions to Abraham, validates him being called “the friend of God” (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:18; James 2:23)
- Sarah’s reaction is same as Abraham’s upon YHWH’s reassurance of progeny
- Abraham displays his ongoing love and care for his nephew by pleading to the Lord for the sparing of him
- YHWH’s immutable nature of grace & mercy (& justice) is on display here in chapter 18

## A. Abraham recognition of theophany & offered reverence & hospitality (vv.1-8)

- V. 1 Now the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day.
- This is the sixth appearance of God to Abraham
- “the oaks of Mamre”
- At end of 13:18
- Ab.’s primary abode



## A. Abraham recognition of theophany & offered reverence & hospitality (vv.1-8)

- V.2: When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth,
- Ch. 18 is to be understood as being closely bound (chronologically) to events in end of prior chapter (17)
- In context one of these 3 “men” is in fact God (a theophany) and the other 2 angels (when considering ch. 19:1 “the 2 angels came to Sodom...”
- Morris: “The context of Genesis 18 and 19 makes it clear that the other two men were angels, who later were sent to Sodom and Gomorrah to bring God’s judgment on those wicked cities. The leader of the three men could have been none other than God Himself and, therefore, Christ in His preincarnate state (John 1:18).”

## A. Abraham recognition of theophany & offered reverence & hospitality (vv.1-8)

- Against/fear of seeing God or Messiah pre-incarnate (or incarnate for that matter), Jewish interpretation has different take here
- Fruchtenbaum gives it here: (not his view mind you)
- In rabbinic tradition, all three are angels; and the reason they say God sent three angels is because they believe no one angel is given more than one thing to do. Therefore, because there are three tasks involved, God had to send three angels. According to Rashi, one angel was there to heal Abraham of his circumcision, and that was the angel **Raphael**; the second one was to inform Sarah that she will have a son, and that was **Michael**; and the third one came to destroy Sodom, and that was **Gabriel**
  - Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, Ariels Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis, 1st ed. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2008), 309310.

## A. Abraham recognition of theophany & offered reverence & hospitality (vv.1-8)

- Abraham “ran” from the tent door and greeted them “bowed himself to the earth”
- The Hebrew word for *bowed* is *shachat*, and this is the first time this word is used in the biblical text
- The phrase “bowed himself” is actually the Hebrew *shachah*, the usual word for “worship.” (Morris)
- Lot in 19:1 also “bowed down” to the 2 angels
- In contrast the wicked reprobate Sodomites wanted to “greet” the angels by molesting them (19:4-5)
- V. 3 Abraham said “my Lord”
- Abraham recognized one of the three to be God Himself and used the divine title of *Adonai*

# A. Abraham recognition of theophany & offered reverence & hospitality (vv.1-8)

- The masculine plural use of Adonai (masc. plural noun) here in the Hebrew text only indicates Abraham realized one of the “men” was a theophany
- Jewish interpreters (because of blindness & obvious view against any pre or incarnate appearance of Messiah) come up with 3 options to Adonai address
- 1. Abraham was only addressing the chief of the 3 angels, thus does not imply or signify deity
- 2. Abraham was speaking to God, not directly to the 3 “men”
- 3. Abraham recognized them as angels & called them by their (the angels) Master’s name, Adonai (Lord)
- Fruchtenbaum: “all 3 options are attempts to get around the obvious”

## A. Abraham recognition of theophany & offered reverence & hospitality (vv.1-8)

- Question Ross proposes here on the Lord appearing in this manner vs. an oracle, a vision, or a voice?
- Ross: “Possibly He meant it as a test for both Abraham and the Sodomites. The moral states of Abraham and Sodom may have been indicated by their different treatments of strangers”
- But more likely Abraham’s visitors meant to convey intimate fellowship. To eat together was important for fellowship, peace offerings, and treaties
- When the Lord was ready to specify the fulfillment of the covenantal promise, He came in person and ate in Abraham’s tent. Nothing could more significantly communicate their close relationship (Ross, from BKC)

## A. Abraham recognition of theophany & offered reverence & hospitality (vv.1-8)

- Abraham actually did a lot more than what he said he would do; he gave them a lot more than merely *a morsel of bread*
- These angels eating gives further credence to the Genesis 6 fallen angel view (of which I hold) that if an angel can eat (thus possessing a digestive system), an angel can have reproductive organs, and thus plausible (even likely) they are in fact “the sons of God” (in addition to book of Job in which angels are called this 1:6; 38:7), also Job took place in the patriarchal time period. (my analysis)...
- Hebrews 13:2 is a confirmation of angels may manifest as “men”
- Abraham was exhibiting genuine hospitality, but also that he was in a hurry to get these amenities taken care of, that he might the sooner learn what the providential message of the visitors might be

## A Divine reaffirmation/announcement & Sarah's reaction (vv. 9-15)

- 9 Then they said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “There, in the tent.”
- 10 He said, “I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.
- Here the focus of the Lord's declaration is for Sarah to hear the promise (reaffirmed) of Isaac (17:19) as the progeny
- The singular pronoun referent lines up with the “I's” in 17:21 (& whole chapter)
- God's promise is fulfilled in 21:1, which indicated God speaking there (21:1)

# A Divine reaffirmation/announcement & Sarah's reaction (vv. 9-15)

- Vv.10b-12 10b "... And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.
- 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing.
- 12 Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"
- Verse 11 confirms the birth will be of YHWH's supernatural/miraculous intervention
- From human perspective "past childbearing" it was impossible to conceive

# A Divine reaffirmation/announcement & Sarah's reaction (vv. 9-15)

- Sarah, like Abraham (17:17), laughed at such a promise
- It was either a laugh in unbelief (Fruchtenbaum); or possible Abraham hadn't told Sarah the promise of 17:19 (Ryrie)....or told by Abraham and still having hard time believing (my analysis)
- Like Abraham's reaction, this would not cancel the unconditional promise of God
- 12 Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"
- "pleasure"..... This is a unique Hebrew term, of uncertain meaning, translated "conception" by an ancient Aramaic translation, "lust" by *HALOT (Hebrew Lexicon)*
- Certainly childbearing was vital & considered sign of blessing in Patriarchal times (and throughout OT)

# A Divine reaffirmation/announcement & Sarah's reaction (vv. 9-15)

- V. 12b “.....my lord being old also?”
- The word *lord* in Hebrew is singular, in contrast with the way Abraham addressed the Person in the plural
- This is the passage Peter refers to in I Peter 3:6 when complimenting Sarah in that she called her husband *lord*
- Ok, so wives be sure to call your husbands “lord” (please note the little !!!.....just joshing!!)
- So Sarah was in unbelief because of both of their advanced ages
- Can we see from the human perspective the unlikelihood and empathize with Sarah here?

# A Divine reaffirmation/announcement & Sarah's reaction (vv. 9-15)

- 13 And the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear *a child*, when I am so old?’
- The Rebuke here shows omniscience, because what she said was “within herself”....she didn't verbalize it
- 14 “Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”
- God's rebuke, where he had been gentle with Abraham (17:17, 19), rather points to the latter, i.e. that Sarah was persisting in unbelief, not merely reacting in astonishment

# A Divine reaffirmation/announcement & Sarah's reaction (vv. 9-15)

- As assurance of his miraculous power, the Lord verbalizes Sarah's secret thoughts. His rhetorical question declares that, since he is God, everything is possible (see 15:4–6; Heb. 11:11; cf. Jer. 32:17; Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37) (Waltke)
- Then in verse 14b is the reaffirmation of the promise: *At the set time, meaning one year from now, I will return unto you, not necessarily physically returning by another appearance, but returning in the sense of the fulfillment of the promise, when the season comes round, one year from now, and the result will be, and Sarah shall have a son.*

# A Divine reaffirmation/announcement & Sarah's reaction (vv. 9-15)

- 15 Sarah denied *it* however, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh.”
- Denied it=lied. The Bible does not gloss over the sins of its hero and heroine of faith (cf. 12:13)
- you did laugh. This is both a restorative rebuke (Prov. 28:13) and an assuring sign: the one who reads her thoughts can open her womb

## II. The Lord turns toward Sodom & informs Abraham 18:16-22

### A. The “men” turn toward Sodom & Lord decides to disclose to Abraham (vv. 16-19)

- **16** Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off.
- The strangers effect beginnings and endings as the messengers of hope and life to Abraham and Sarah and of judgment and death to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6; Ps. 76:7; Isa. 45:7)
- *and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way, meaning to escort them part of the way, which was the customary way of doing things in those days*

## A. The “men” turn toward Sodom & Lord decides to disclose to Abraham (vv. 16-19)

- 17 The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,
- 18 since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?
- At this point, God chose to give to Abraham the revelation of Sodom’s destruction
- The obvious answer is “no.” The reasons are found in verses 18–19. God’s first reason, in verse 18, is based on the future fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant:
- Additionally since Abraham is called “the friend of God” (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; Jam. 2:23)

## A. The “men” turn toward Sodom & Lord decides to disclose to Abraham (vv. 16-19)

- 18 since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? (bold added)
- 19 “For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.” (bold added)
- Such a nation has to learn justice beginning with its father, Abraham (18:17–19). The Lord models justice to Abraham in his treatment of the Sodomites (18:20–33) and through this remarkable dialogue he educes Abraham’s integrity
  - Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, Genesis: A Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 269.

## A. The “men” turn toward Sodom & Lord decides to disclose to Abraham (vv. 16-19)

- The second reason for confiding in Abraham is given in verse 19, and is based on Abraham’s spiritual status: *For I have known him.*
- The Hebrew word for known is “to know by experience,” “intimate knowing.”
- so that he may command his children and his household after **him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice**
- meaning that he may pass down the commandments of the Lord to his posterity (see, e.g., Deut. 6:6; Prov. 1:8)
- This obedience involved doing two things: *to do righteousness, which is internal, and to do justice, which is external*
  - Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariels Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis*, 1st ed. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2008), 315.

# A. The “men” turn toward Sodom & Lord decides to disclose to Abraham (vv. 16-19)

- Fruchtenbaum:
- In fact, God was about to destroy four cities because of their unrighteousness and because of their injustice. Then He gave another purpose: *to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he [had] spoken of him, so that God could fulfill all His promises to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant*
  - Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariels Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis*, 1st ed. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2008), 315.

## B. The Lord's proclamation to Abraham about Sodom (vv. 20-22)

- 20 And the LORD said, “The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.
- The word *cry* is *zaakah*, which makes a word play with the Hebrew word for “righteousness,” *tzedakah*. In place of *tzedakah*, righteousness, it is *zaakah*, a cry, because their sin is very grievous
- their sin. The narrator spoke earlier of Sodom's wickedness (13:13; see also ch. 19, esp. vv. 4–5 and note; Ezek. 16:49–50)
  - Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 269.

## B. The Lord's proclamation to Abraham about Sodom (vv. 20-22)

- 21 “I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.”
- It was not an admission that God did not already know these things, but the point is to show that God had carefully scrutinized every detail
- Therefore, when God performs a massive judgment, it does not come out of any ignorance. This will show that the punishment came after a very full investigation and a very full account.

## B. The Lord's proclamation to Abraham about Sodom (vv. 20-22)

- In the same way, He earlier had “come down” to Babel, to see the rebellion there. It was not, of course, that God could not know the full facts without actually going down into the city, since He is omniscient. He no doubt did this for appearance' sake, that men might know directly that God had actually seen the full situation before He acted in judgment
  - Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1976), 342.

## B. The Lord's proclamation to Abraham about Sodom (vv. 20-22)

- **22** Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the LORD.
- Verse 22 gives the circumstance, beginning with the two angels: *And the men turned from thence, meaning from God and Abraham, and went toward Sodom*
- As for the third member: *but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. God's visible form stayed behind, and Abraham was standing before God's visible manifestation in human form*
  - Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariels Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis*, 1st ed. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2008), 317.

### III. Abraham's plea & negotiations with the Lord 18:23-33

#### A. Abraham's initial reasonable plea to the Lord (v. 23)

- 23 Abraham came near and said, "Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"
- Abraham's intercession on behalf of Sodom was no doubt instigated by his concern over his nephew Lot, who now was living in that city
- Abraham began by drawing near to God: *And Abraham drew near, and said. Drawing near often has the concept of worship*
- I believe Abraham was approaching YHWH in a reverent manner to intercede for his nephew and family

## A. Abraham's initial reasonable plea to the Lord (v. 23)

- Abraham's arguments for sparing Sodom are founded on a concern for justice, not merely the presence of his nephew Lot in the city
- Abraham was convinced there were righteous people in Sodom—he did not pray merely for Lot—so he appealed for Sodom on the basis of God's justice. (Ross, BKC)
- Since Abraham had an intimate relationship with YHWH, he understood the perfect grace, mercy and justness that YHWH possessed.....Who He is by nature
- Earlier he had personally rescued these people in battle (14:16). Now he pleaded for them with the same boldness, perseverance, and generosity with which he had fought for them

## A. Abraham's initial reasonable plea to the Lord (v. 23)

- Abraham's "bargaining" with God jars some readers. But Abraham's prayers, though audacious, were made with genuine humility and profound reverence. It was for justice that he pleaded
- Abraham is feeling his way forward in a spirit of faith (superbly expressed in 25c, where he grasps the range and rightness of God's rule), of humility, in his whole mode of address, and of love, demonstrated in his concern for the whole city, not for his kinsmen alone
  - Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 144.

## B. Abraham's propositions & YHWH's reactions (vv. 24-33)

- 24 “Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep *it* away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?”
- 25 “Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are *treated* alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”
- Far be it from you!... This is an expression of profound deference and humility. Abraham evidences his leadership qualities in his boldness, moral wisdom, and skillful speeches to God
  - Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 270.

## B. Abraham's propositions & YHWH's reactions (vv. 24-33)

- Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? The Hebrew literally means “to do justice” (i.e., to restore a community’s right order under God’s rule by punishing those who destroy it with oppression of the weak and by delivering the oppressed)
- The question could be read as a challenge to God, but sound theology demands it be read as a deliberative prayer asserting faith in God’s just character and as a “conduit for the divine fulfillment.”
  - Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 270.

## B. Abraham's propositions & YHWH's reactions (vv. 24-33)

- The Lord's answer:
- 26 So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account."
- Like the people of Noah's age, the Sodomites had opportunity to repent and change their wicked ways. As with everyone, their time of grace to repent comes to an end
- Abraham prayed first that the city might be spared if there were fifty righteous people found in it, then forty-five, then forty, then thirty, then twenty, and finally only ten. Each time God agreed to his request, so that if only ten righteous people could have been found in Sodom, God would not have destroyed the city (Morris)

## B. Abraham's propositions & YHWH's reactions (vv. 24-33)

- 26 So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account."
- 27 And Abraham replied, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am *but* dust and ashes."
- 28 "Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five?" And He said, "I will not destroy *it* if I find forty-five there."
- 29 He spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose forty are found there?" And He said, "I will not do *it* on account of the forty."
- 30 Then he said, "Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?" And He said, "I will not do *it* if I find thirty there."
- 31 And he said, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy *it* on account of the twenty."

## B. Abraham's propositions & YHWH's reactions (vv. 24-33)

- V. 32: “Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy *it* on account of the ten.”
- Abraham stopped at ten, because he assumed that would be sufficient because of the size of Lot's family, since Lot's total household at this point did number ten: Lot; Lot's wife; Lot's two sons (19:12); his two married daughters (19:14); and his two sons-in-laws (19:14); and finally, his two single virgin daughters (19:8) (Fruchtenbaum)
- While Lot's household was numerically strong at ten, the problem was that not all ten were righteous. In fact, perhaps only one might have been righteous, and that was Lot
  - Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariels Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis*, 1st ed. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2008), 318.

## B. Abraham's propositions & YHWH's reactions (vv. 24-33)

- 33 As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the LORD departed, and Abraham returned to his place.
- It is now established that the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, the paradigm for God's future judgments, is just
- Fruchtenbaum has 5 observations about Abraham's prayer
  - 1. it is very specific, numerically specific
  - 2. He was willing to come to YHWH with boldness
  - 3. At same time, his boldness was paired with humility
  - 4. He was earnest pleading to approach just one more time
  - 5. He was persistent, willing to go from 50 - 10

## B. Abraham's propositions & YHWH's reactions (vv. 24-33)

- God's answer:
- God did answer Abraham's desire, which was to save Lot, because Genesis 19:29 states that God remembered Abraham when He rescued Lot
- Moreover, the reason He rescued Lot was because of Lot's relationship to Abraham (and I would add, Lot had imputed righteousness, akin to Abraham, since he was also a believer)
- Thus the theme of justice predominates: those who will enjoy God's blessing (a) will teach justice (18:19); (b) may intercede for just judgment to preserve the righteous; and (c) know that God may preserve the wicked for the sake of the righteous
  - Allen P. Ross, Genesis, in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 60.

## Some “takeaways” from Ch. 18

- The Lord continues His intimate relationship with Abraham by reassuring Abraham and Sarah that the promised seed, Isaac, would be born in one year from Sarah
- The Lord reassures this would be a “supernatural” guided event (v.14)
- The Lord shows the intimate relationship He had with Abraham in disclosing His destruction of Sodom to him
- Additionally “the friend of God” status is displayed in the grace & mercy YHWH displays in listening to Abraham’s pleas (23-32)
- Question for us: Do we seek daily an intimate relationship with the Lord, or do we take the Lord for granted?

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