

Genesis 18.16-33

"Save our City"

WORLD > Terror, Fear, Uncertainty, Despair, Hunger, Suffering

Widespread Disagreement > SOURCE OF PROBLEM??

POLITICAL PROBLEM? ELECT RIGHT CANDIDATES!

LEGAL PROBLEM – MORE LAWS? – More JUDGES / More Police? Prisons?

ECONOMIC PROBLEM - Throw MORE MONEY at Problem - RAISE TAXES

EDUCATION PROBLEM - BETTER EDUCATE CRIMINALS & DEVIANTS

ANSWER LIES WITHIN THIS "VISIT WITH GOD" - occurred 4000 yrs. ago

between Lord God and 99 year old man named Abraham

LORD & 2 ANGELS - ENTERTAINED BY BEDOUIN HOST - FINEST MEAL

GOOD NEAR EASTERN HOST - walks guest at least part way home

Koran > Good Host walks his Guests to their Camels

v. 16 When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way.

1. God's Intention

a. Revealed - Principles

One of Most Intriguing Revelations of God in OT – found here Genesis 18

Heavenly Delegation - APPEARED IN MIDDLE OF NOONDAY SUN

NO DOGS BARKING / NO GUARDS ALERTED

v. 1 The LORD appeared to Abraham

v. 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby.

v. 10 The Lord said / he'd come back

v. 16 When the men got up to leave

v. 22 The men turned away and went toward Sodom

PERHAPS AN OLD TESTAMENT FORESHADOWING OF THE TRINITY

Perhaps Pre-Incarnate Appearance - THE LORD JESUS // 2 ANGELS

2 FRIENDS TALK OF GREAT EVENTS

v. 17,18 Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.

REFLECTS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GUEST AND HIS HOST

John 15.15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Amos 3.7 Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

Psalms 25.14 The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.

ROBERT CANDLISH "(Abraham) is in a position to be trusted. He is not a stranger or an enemy, who must be kept at a distance...He stands high in the favor and fellowship of God, and it is not unreasonable that God should impart to him an intimate knowledge of His works & ways."

NOT HAPPEN RIGHT AWAY - A MAN WHO WALKED W/ GOD 25 YRS.

PRIVILEGED TO ENTER INTO THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD

KNOW THE HEART AND VISION OF GOD HIMSELF

WE DO SO thru HIS WORD - READING & STUDYING SCRIPTURE

2 Peter 1.4 he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

b. Concealed - Particulars STILL MANY MYSTERIES IN GOD'S PLAN
ABRAHAM WONDERS DETAILS OF HOW PLAN OF GOD WILL UNFOLD

v. 23 "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"

ABRAHAM DOES NOT ASSUME AN ARROGANT ATTITUDE

STILL MANY QUESTIONS WE CANNOT ANSWER / OR EVEN ASK

Habak 2.20 the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him

Rom 11.34 "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been his counselor?"

KNOWING GOD'S HEART IS NOT KNOWING ALL DETAILS

CALL IS TO WORSHIP NOT WIZARDRY / HUMILITY NOT HAUGHTINESS

There are 2 TRUTHS OF LIFE: 1. There is a God 2. You are not Him

Deuteronomy 29.29 The *secret things* belong to the LORD our God, but the *things revealed* belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

JAMES BOICE "Abraham did not demand knowledge of God's secret purposes in election, nor did Abraham think this knowledge necessary in making his petitions. We may learn from this that there is no need to feel hindered or restrained in praying for unconverted individuals or cities or the world just because we do not know God's ultimate purpose for them."

2. God's Investigation

a. Hears v. 20 LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great

GOD OF BIBLE - LIVING GOD - CAN HEAR! > Contra PAGAN NATIONS

“their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men....they have ears, but cannot hear”
Psalms 115.4-6

Psalms 34.17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them

GOD CONFRONTED CAIN WITH HIS MURDEROUS CRIME - Genesis 4.10
"What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground"

GOD HEARS THE CRIES OF A CHILD WHO IS TEASED

THE SCREAMS OF A YOUTH BEATEN BY A DRUNKEN FATHER

GOD HEARS HUSHED Conversation OF EVERY CORRUPT POLITICIAN

GOD HEARS THE SCREAMS OF TEENAGE GIRL BEING RAPED

GOD HEARS THE MALICIOUS GOSSIP THAT TEARS PEOPLE APART

GOD LISTENS TO SOBS OF A WOMAN ABANDONED BY HER HUSBAND

MILLIONS OF CRIES - EVERY SINGLE DAY - FILL THE WHOLE EARTH

CRIES THAT ARE HEARD AND FELT BY GOD

CRIES OF OPPRESSED WORKMAN

James 5.4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

OUR PRAYERS AND TEARS TO GOD ARE NOT IN VAIN > Psalms 145.19
“He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.”

b. Cares THE CRIES OF THE EARTH MOVE THE HEART OF GOD

v. 20 and their sin so grievous / TO WHOM? / TO HIM

SIN IS AN AFFRONT TO HIS HOLINESS / A SLAP IN HIS FACE

"Let my heart be broken by that which breaks the heart of God" Bob Pierce

2 Peter 3.9 "The Lord is... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Ezekiel 18.23 Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

ANYONE WHO DOUBTS GOD'S CARE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND CROSS
 GOD CARES SO MUCH HE GAVE UP HIS OWN SON - DIES FOR SINNERS
 MOST OF WHOM DON'T CARE - EVEN FEWER STOP TO THANK HIM
 IF JESUS STRETCHING OUT HIS ARMS & DYING IS SAYING ANYTHING,
 HE SAYS "I care, God cares, we must also care"

c. Sees NOTHING IS UNSEEN BY GOD'S ALL SEEING EYES

v. 21 I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me.

GOD IS NOT SATISFIED WITH RUMORS AND SECONDHAND REPORTS
 HE TAKES TIME AND SEE FOR HIMSELF - HE WILL BE SURE OF TRUTH

1 Timothy 5.19 Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. GOOD RULE FOR ALL IN FAMILY OF GOD

d. Knows NOTHING UNNOTICED BY GOD > v. 21 "If not, I will know."

The LORD knows the thoughts of man

Psalm 94.11

ALL HEARING/ ALL CARING/ ALL SEEING / ALL KNOWING - ALL TIME
 KNEW EVERYTHING that HAPPENED IN SODOM BEFORE HE GOT THERE

ALSO OMNIPRESENT - IN SODOM before He Arrived - HE IS EVERYWHERE

Hearing / Seeing / Going ANTHROPOMORPHISM - Human Descriptions of God

WHY? - to impress upon us His intimate concern for the world

WHY SODOM?- TIME TO REPENT- RESCUED BY ABE / REJECTED GOD

GREAT WARNING OF GOD'S ULTIMATE JUDGMENT ON ALL SIN

SODOM AND GOMORRAH > Watchword of JUDGMENT TO HUMAN RACE

This is My Father's World, & tho the wrong seems so strong, God is the ruler yet

3. Godly Intercession

GOD'S INVESTIGATION OF S & G shows REAL PROBLEM of Our World

NOT POLITICAL - NOT LEGAL - NOT ECONOMIC - NOT EDUCATIONAL

ALTHOUGH GOD'S ANSWER MAKES IMPACT IN ALL THESE AREAS

Problem is SPIRITUAL - PERSON'S RELATIONSHIP W/GOD WHO IS SPIRIT

MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE - POWERFUL WEAPON - IS PRAYER

THING WE DO THE LEAST BUT IT HELPS THE MOST

Abe hears Solemn NEWS OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN JUDGMENT > He PRAYS

WARREN WIERSBE "Abraham belonged to that select company of God's people known as intercessors, individuals like Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Jeremiah, the Apostles, and our Lord Jesus Himself. In fact, our Lord's ministry today in heaven is a ministry of intercession (Hebrews 7.25); so we are never more like our Lord than when we are interceding for others"

a. Bold PRESSES HARD INTO GOD IN MIDST OF THE RAGING STORM

STORMS of LIFE COME / HAND of GOD STRIKES - ABE NOT RUN AWAY

ST. AUGUSTINE - child who has aroused anger of Father

RUNS TOWARD FATHER - CLINGS TO HIM - SO ARMS CANNOT STRIKE

v. 22 Abraham remained standing before the LORD

INTERCEDES WITH COURAGE AND CONVICTION

v. 27 Abe spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord

MODEL OF KIND OF PRAYER WE NEED TO OFFER TO GOD Hebrews 4.16
 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, (OR BOLDNESS) so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

JESUS: STORY OF MAN WHO GOES TO FRIENDS HOUSE AT MIDNIGHT FOR FOOD FOR HIS GUEST WHO ARRIVED UNEXPECTEDLY > Luke 11.8
 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

b. Humble OTHER SIDE OF COIN OF OUR APPROACH TO GOD

v. 27 though I am nothing but dust and ashes,

Ground OF BOLDNESS IS NOT SELF-CONFIDENCE, OR SELF-ASSURANCE
 COMES BOLDLY TO GOD BECAUSE GOD IS GRACIOUS AND INVITING

P 8.4 what is man that you are mindful of him...son of man that you care for him?

CHARLES SPURGEON "If lost sinners will not listen you speak, they cannot prevent your praying. Do they laugh at your exhortations? They cannot disturb you at your prayers. Are they far away so you cannot reach them? Your prayers can reach them. Have they declared that they will never listen to you again, or see your face? Never mind, God has a voice which they must hear. Speak to him and He will make them feel. Though they now treat you despitefully, rendering evil for your good, follow them with your prayers. Never let them perish for lack of your supplications."

James 4.6 "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

c. Family IMPORTANT BEGINNING POINT OF OUR INTERCESSION

v. 19 For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

HOW TRAGIC FOR ABRAHAM'S NEPHEW LOT - moved to Sodom to witness
 2 Pet 2:7 a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men

DID NOT REACH OWN FAMILY FOR LORD - WIFE TURNED TO SALT
 IF HE MADE GREATER IMPACT PERHAPS 10 WOULD'VE BEEN SAVED

IRONY of Bob PIERCE – Founder of World Vision > Great Xian Humanitarian

"Let my heart be broken by the things which break the heart of God"

1 THING BROKE GOD'S HEART WAS PIERCE'S NEGLECT HIS CHILDREN
 SO BUSY SAVING THE WORLD HE LOST HIS OWN KIDS - all too common

v. 19 "so that" CONDITION ON PROMISED BLESSING / DIRECT YOUR KIDS
 BY YOUR LIFE & LIP / WALK & TALK / NOT PERFECT BUT PERSISTENT
 CANNOT MAKE THEM FOLLOW GOD - CAN SHOW THEM RIGHT WAY

PRIORITY IN MINISTRY MAKES US MORE HUMBLE AND PRAYERFUL
 HUMBLE - we cannot even change our own kids, how change world

PRAYERFUL - we're not supposed to change our kids, ask God to do

PRAY THAT GOD WILL GRANT THEM THE GIFT OF SAVING FAITH

d. Persistent ABRAHAM INTERCEDED FOR SODOM SIX TIMES

BEGINNING WITH 50 PEOPLE AND GOING DOWN TO 10 RIGHTEOUS

WAS NOT FORCING GOD FROM POINT TO POINT

AS IF PRYING SOMETHING OUT OF GOD'S UNWILLING HAND

GOD WAS DRAWING HIM ON - DRAWING HIM CLOSER TO HIMSELF
 INTO A DEEPER - ALMOST DIZZYING HEIGHT OF FELLOWSHIP w/ GOD

Jesus told his disciples a parable WIDOW SOUGHT JUSTICE > RELENTLESS
 INSISTENCE > to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

Luke 18.1

People of SODOM KNEW OLD MAN ABRAHAM - he rescued them all
 AS THEY GAZED UP FROM THEIR VALLEY FLOOR COULD SEE MAMRE
 NEVER REALIZED HE WAS PLEADING WITH GOD ON THEIR BEHALF
 WORLD HATES People OF GOD - NEVER REALIZE BLESSING THEY ARE
 FATHER-IN-LAW OF JACOB HAD HIS HERDS MULTIPLIED BY HIS GOD
 Genesis 30.27 Laban said to JACOB "the LORD has blessed me because of you."

ALL TRAVELING ON SHIP WITH PAUL WERE SPARED BECAUSE OF HIM
 Acts 27.24 God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine
 Ephesians 3.20

e. Persuasive BASED ON THE JUST CHARACTER OF GOD

v. 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked,
 treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge
 of all the earth do right?"

DID NOT PLEAD ANY CLAIM ON GOD - FOR WE HAVE NONE
 RATHER BASED ON GOD'S CHARACTER - His JUSTICE & GLORY
 HIS HONOR BE DEFAMED IF RIGHTEOUS PERISHED WITH WICKED
 THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH WILL DO RIGHT

MUCH LIKE MOSES PLEAD FOR ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS

Exodus 32.11-12 "O LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against your
 people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?"

SINNERS CLAIM GOD IS NOT FAIR - WHY DID HE PREDESTINE SOME?
 WRONG QUESTION - WHY DID HE PREDESTINE ANY?? ALL SINNED!!

Horrible REALITY - Despite GODLY INTERCESSION OF ABRAHAM
 THE WRATH OF GOD FELL UPON THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN
 SOBERING FACT- ESPECIALLY FOR ANY OUTSIDE OF JESUS CHRIST

SOME ASK "why doesn't God do right?"

WHAT THEY MEAN "why doesn't He overlook my sin?"

HE IS TOO JUST AND RIGHTEOUS TO DO THAT

GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED EVEN IN HIS WRATH AGAINST SIN

Galatians 6:14 May I never boast (OR GLORY) except in the cross of our Lord
 Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
 ONLY REFUGE FROM WRATH OF GOD - SOMEONE TAKING FOR YOU
 JESUS CHRIST - RIGHTEOUS ONE - ALONE PROPITIATES GOD'S WRATH

NEVER Underestimate IMPORTANCE of SMALL NUMBER OF BELIEVERS
 CHURCH TOO FOCUSED ON NUMBERS - WANT MANY TO BE SAVED
 NEVER UNDERESTIMATE POWERFUL IMPACT that CAN BE MADE BY
 ONE MAN, WOMAN, BOY, OR GIRL - IN HANDS OF A SOVEREIGN GOD

DWIGHT MOODY HEARD CHALLENGE > "the world has yet to see what God
 can do with one man who wholly committed to Him"

HIS RESPONSE "by God's grace, I want to be that man!"

Genesis 18: ¹⁶ When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.^[c] ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” ²⁰ Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” ²² The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD.^[d] ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare^[e] the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” ²⁶ The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” ²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?” “If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.” ²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?” He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.” ³⁰ Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” ³¹ Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?” He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.” ³² Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.” ³³ When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.