



OPENING COMMENT

In a radical move, God chooses to include Abraham in His divine plan with Sodom and Gomorrah. Through this encounter, recorded by Moses, we have a unique perspective of God's interaction with His chosen people and can discern what it looks like to walk with God, hear from God, and wrestle with God as we gain understanding of His plan and purpose.

READ THE TEXT: Genesis 18:16-33

Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷ The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?¹⁹ For I have chosen him, 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 to Abraham what he has promised him." ²⁰ Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹ I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."

²² So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. ²³ Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from



you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" ²⁶ And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

²⁷ Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹ Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." ³⁰ Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹ He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." ³² Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." ³³ And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. Verses 16 – 19 are unique in that they show God conversing with himself about what he ought to do next. It would be tempting to see this as God being indecisive, which could not be further from the truth. What then, does this picture tell us about God and his relationship to Abraham?
2. How is Abraham juxtaposed with Sodom and Gomorrah? (Vs. 19-20)
3. What motivates God to investigate Sodom and Gomorrah? (Vs. 20)
4. Since we know clearly from other scripture that God is omniscient (all knowing), what does his investigative actions tell us about His character? (vs. 21)
5. What is Abraham's big question as he begins to wrestle with God? (vs. 22-26)
6. How would you describe the character of Abraham's interaction with God?
7. In light of the imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, what does the "negotiation" with God reveal about God's character? What does it reveal about the aforementioned cities?

APPLYING THE TEXT

1. God's requirement of Abraham is to be just and righteous as he is just and righteous. In what areas are you in acting justice and righteousness in your life?
2. How does God's intentional investigation give us comfort as we talk to those outside of faith?
3. In what areas of life do you find yourself asking the question Abraham asked of God? Shall not the judge of all the earth to do what is just?
4. In essence, Abraham's conversation with God is a template of prayer. How does your prayer life differ from that of this interaction with God?



5. What is the result of Abrahams conversation with God? How would understanding this reality of prayer help us as we engage God?
6. How does Abraham's intercessory prayer reflect one of the roles of Christ?
7. Abraham stands in the gap for a sinful city, even though they are full of wretchedness. How are you standing in the gap for your sinful city?

BIBLICAL THREAD

1. Ezekiel 16 – Jerusalem made out to be a faithless bride. In the process the sins of Sodom are clarified particularly in vs. 49 and 50
2. Psalm 146:7-9 – defining justice and righteousness
3. Proverbs 31:8 – defining justice and righteousness.
4. Jeremiah 22:3 – defining justice and righteousness
5. Micah 6:8 – what does God require?
6. Luke 18:1-8 – Parable on Justice.
7. John 15:1-17 – Jesus says he calls his disciples friends because he has revealed his plans to them.
8. Revelation 18-22 – God has revealed, just as He did with Abraham, the judgment of the world.

CONCLUSION

The result of God including Abraham in His sovereign plan was to reveal a few key characteristics of God Himself. First, in including Abraham God shows that He is a God who intimately knows the sins and plights of all of Creation. Second, it reveals that God is eager to save even if there are only a very few who would be counted as righteous. Finally, it shows Abraham that God is willing to endure the questioning to help his people understand his plans and purposes in the world. This should grant us great confidence as we approach His throne seeking to understand what is unclear and wrestle with what seems unjust.

Secondarily though, we also see that the sins of Sodom were utterly complete: that there was none righteous. Abrahams negotiations whittled God down to only 10 righteous people, yet the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah moved ahead as planned. This should be a sober reminder that God's judgment on an unrighteous world is not the result of a trigger-happy megalomaniac, but the result of conscious rebellion. God is eager to save, even if only a few were righteous, yet as Romans tells us, "there is none righteous, not even one." A clear understand of this reality should drive us to praise the God who did not leave us in our sin, and inevitable destruction, but gave himself on our behalf so that we could be found as righteous in his sight.



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LIFE GROUP VISION:

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

