

Faith and Prayer

Abraham—part 10

Genesis 18:16-33

August 9, 2026

Reaffirmation of the covenant

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.

Genesis 18:17 Then the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?”

Genesis 18:18 “Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”

Deuteronomy 6:6 These commandments ... are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Eph. 6:1 ... obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.

Eph. 6:2 Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Prov. 22:15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away.

God's justice and mercy

Genesis 18:17 Then the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?”

Genesis 18:20 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.”

Genesis 4:10 The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. ¹¹ Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

Genesis 18:20 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.”

a. Perpetrators, agents

b. Victims

Prayer: Abraham and God “negotiate”

Genesis 18:22 The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. 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 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.

God’s mercy and justice

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. ¹⁰ This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority.

Justice and mercy

- a. Justice is needed in a fallen world, to create restraints on evil and punish those who insist on doing evil (Romans 13:1-7)
- b. Allowing evil to continue without judgment is not “loving.”
- c. God cannot be thought of as a “loving God” if He allows violent evil to go unchecked and unpunished.
- d. God’s justice is not arbitrary. It is based on people’s actual behavior.

Isaiah 26:9 When Your judgments come upon the earth the people of the word learn righteousness.

- e. You cannot say you are being compassionate to the victims of perpetrators without bringing some kind of punishment and justice upon those very criminals and perpetrators.
- f. You cannot say you’re being compassionate to perpetrators without at the same time being hardened and unmerciful to the victims of perpetrators.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.

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