

Abraham drew near and said [to the Lord], “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Far be it from you to do such a thing...” (Gen. 18:22-25)

Merciful God, you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Thank you for the gift of salvation by grace through faith. Help us to remember to trust in and depend on you. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Introduction

At a time when there was no organized worship of the Lord, God chose a man named Abraham and promised that he would be the father of a great nation. At the same time, God revealed to Abraham his plan to destroy the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Read: Genesis 18:17-33

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

The first five books of the Bible are known as the **Pentateuch**. Jewish people call this section of their Bible the **Torah**, meaning “teaching” or “instruction.” These books use stories to teach history and morals.

The biblical period of the Ancestors begins with Abraham and Sarah. Originally known as Abram and Sarai, God called this husband and wife to travel from their homeland in Mesopotamia to a new promised land in Canaan, along with Abraham’s nephew, Lot. When the two parted ways, Abraham dwelt in the country, while Lot settled in the city of Sodom (referenced in today’s story).

God promised that Abraham would be the father of many nations in faith, though it took several visits from God for Abraham to actually believe it. Religious people throughout the world — Jews, Muslims, and Christians — trace their faith ancestry back to him.

Discussion Questions

1. Years prior to today’s story, Abraham and his nephew Lot parted ways (see Genesis 13:8-13). Why did they do that? To what land did Lot choose to go, and why? Where did Abraham go?
2. Today’s story from Genesis 18 takes place directly after God promised that Abraham and Sarah would have a son in their old age (Genesis 17). How was God’s wrath against Sodom and Gomorrah the flip side of his gracious promise to Abraham? What did God promise to do through Isaac (v. 17:19)?
3. The Bible has already said several times the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked and that their sin was “very grave” (v. 18:20). Why do you think that Abraham was so concerned about them when he heard of God’s plan?
4. In his appeal to the Lord, how would you describe Abraham’s mood or attitude? Do you ever feel this way toward God? When or why? Or why not?
5. What do you make of Abraham’s countdown in verses 24-32? Was he stalling for time, hoping that God would change his mind? Or was he hoping for something else?
6. From what you know of how this story plays out in Genesis 19, did God remain true to his word? Did God end up sparing anyone in Sodom?
7. Read Ephesians 2:1-9. In what way do all of us deserve the same fate as Sodom? What is our problem? What motivated God to spare us in Jesus? How does this fulfill God’s promise in Genesis 17:19?