

Chapter 18.

Jehovah's visit. Jehovah followed up on His promise to return to visit Abraham at the set time the following year. Abraham had immediately complied with the rite of circumcision which Jehovah had instituted as the sign of His covenant. This action ratified Abraham's acceptance of the covenant placing himself, his son and all the men among his servants under it. This time he would pay earnest heed to the wonderful promises given him by the God of the Universe. What grace that Jehovah would return to carry out His covenant even though Abram and Sarai had not demonstrated a lot of interest in it for a dozen years. In fact their actions involving Hagar in producing an heir could have been taken as a rejection of God's wonderful promise. And as far as we are told Abram didn't seem to call upon God that whole time. Yet God faithfully returned to renew His promise that Isaac would be born of Sarah.

Now on this second visit Jehovah and His angelic companions appeared in human form in the heat of the day. Abram welcomed them and invited them for a hot meal. This was no mere snack and, though hastily prepared, must have taken hours to prepare—to dress and cook the meat and knead and bake the bread. But the visitors were patient and waited courteously to be served, though none of them needed food for sustenance. Jehovah waited until they had finished eating before He brought up His business with Abram. Obviously this was not to be a casual visit between friends dropping by on their way somewhere else.

First making sure Sarah was within hearing, Jehovah announced that when He returned next she would be mother of a son. Abraham had laughed with believing joy when on the last visit Jehovah had promised as son by Sarah. Jehovah had actually given them new names in anticipation of their new status as head of the chosen generation to occupy and possess he had been promised. Abraham had only reluctantly given up his hopes of a line through Ishmael. But now he seriously believed God actually meant to give him a son though Sarah. She, keeping a low profile, laughed doubtfully within herself at the pronouncement. But God, knowing her thoughts and her disbelief, called her on it. This drew out her denial, and His affirmation of the promise and that He indeed did know all things, even her thoughts. Both Paul and Peter commented on this incident.

Romans 4:17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when

he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

But please read all of Romans 4:1 - 25.

Romans 9:9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

Heb 11:11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

1Peter 3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Sarah, though at first incredulous, believed after Jehovah's gentle but firm rebuke.

14 *Is any thing too hard for the LORD?*

The two of them, united in soul perhaps more than they had been for years, would come together in resurrection faith to have son.

But there was other business to tend to first. The guests were leaving, heading eastward. While the two men [angels] went on to Sodom, Jehovah paused to confide in Abraham His intent to judge Sodom. He was under no obligation to tell him but this shows that He regarded Abraham as His friend. He has confided much to us in His word as well. Value it.

James 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

(Notice how often in scripture God signals to His human friends His intent to judge others instead of simply striking the blow. And notice how He personally comes down to see for Himself, though we know He knows all things before they even happen and sees them as they happen in real time as well. He walked in the garden after Adam had sinned. He came down before the flood in Noah's time and again to see the works at Babel. Here He was again, confirming the sordid condition of Sodom. His most recent such visit to earth was as the Son of Man, Christ Jesus.)

Abram, as a friend would, boldly stepped before Jehovah blocking His path. How this must have delighted Him. God is approachable and He desires our intimate confidence too. Yet Abraham was not unduly familiar with Him as some are nowadays. He was deeply respectful to this Friend, not forgetting Who He is. (God doesn't need our worship and subjection to feed some massive, infinite ego. But He knows we are blessed by being able to humble ourselves before a Person worthy of worship and praise.)

Intercession. Here we have an exquisite example of intercession by one beloved by God on behalf of another beloved of God. Intercession presumes upon God's known

character and personality and finds the intercessor inserting himself into the very heart of God. What sweet fellowship there is in such prayer. Yes, fellowship between God and His own, and among His own as well.

Abraham's premise for his intercession was based upon God's very nature, His love and His righteousness. God is just! Abraham knew it and cited it.

“Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”

“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

How did Abraham know this? He knew God had saved eight in the ark.

Abraham also made a distinction between the wicked and the righteous. How did he do that? He counted Lot as righteous. This was probably the basis for Peter's statement about Lot.

2Peter 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

Are we able to distinguish today? As far as fellowship with others, Jesus said:

Matthew 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Are we expected to make these distinctions today? Paul says:

1Corinthians 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Abraham was cautious but did he really have to

wheel God down to the number he stopped at? There was fellowship with God in the process of laboring in prayer. And there was a limit. Abraham didn't know God's limit in this case. Obviously God didn't promise that Sodom would be saved if there were fewer than five. Why five? Perhaps Abram thought, “surely there would be five.” But there was not even quite four. Sodom wasn't saved! But Lot and his daughters were rescued out of it. Soon we who are alive will be rescued off this earth before it is overtaken in judgement. Will we be down to three or four worldwide? Noah was down to eight. How many were watching for the birth of the King, even though it had been prophetically forecast within, say forty years?. Are we aware of the times and seasons?

1Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

By Ronald Canner, June 30, 2010