

THE INTERCESSION OF A SPIRITUAL BELIEVER

GENESIS 18:16-33; 19:16, 27-29

Introduction

In the last couple of weeks we have looked at this passage from two different aspects.

We first looked at it from the standpoint of Sodom as we looked at the destruction of Sodom.

Then we looked at it from the aspect of Lot as we saw the spiritual decline of a believer.

This morning I want us to look at this passage from the aspect of Abraham as we see the results of THE INTERCESSION OF A SPIRITUAL BELIEVER.

We often look at the rescue of Lot being on the basis of Lot being a righteous man, (and Peter tells us in 2 Peter 2:7-8 that Lot was righteous). But chapter nineteen reveals in two places that Lot was rescued for other reason than just being righteous.

Look with me at verse 16.

We see here that Lot hesitated to leave the city, but it says that God had mercy on him and rescued him anyway.

How many times have we gotten ourselves into situations we have no business being in but God had mercy on us and delivered us from our own stupidity. I know that has certainly been the case in my own life.

As we look in verse 29 we see another reason that Lot was rescued. **(Read verses 27-29)** It says here that God remembered Abraham. What is that referring to? Well, we have to look back at chapter 18 to understand this.

Genesis 18 records the fact that Sodom and Gomorrah's sin had reached the point of being destroyed by God. In verses 23-33 we find Abraham's impassioned intercession for Sodom.

In those verses, if you remember, we found that because of Abraham's intercession, God said that He was willing to spare Sodom if at least ten righteous people could be found there.

We know from having read Genesis 19 that ten righteous people could not be

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found and that God rained fire and brimstone down on both Sodom and Gomorrah.

Nevertheless, because of Abraham's petition, God rescued Lot.

I want us to look today at some principles we find in the intercession of Abraham for Sodom as we look at – *“The Intercession Of A Spiritual Believer.”*

I. ABRAHAM WAS A MAN WHO WALKED BY FAITH!

Hebrews 11:8–“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”

Romans 4:20-22–“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.”

If you don't live your life by faith, you won't be an intercessor.

Now we know that Lot had faith in his life, but he didn't walk by faith the way he should have.

We know that he had faith because he was righteous and the only way a person can be righteous is by faith.

But Lot did not walk in the faith that he had, but rather he walked by sight. So rather than becoming an intercessor, he became a compromiser, and the results were tragic as we saw last week.

II. ABRAHAM WAS THE FIRST TO GET THE NEWS OF WHAT GOD WAS GOING TO DO! (Genesis 18:17)

God did not destroy Sodom without letting Abraham know about it first.

God often informed people who were close to Him and sought Him about what He intended to do on various occasions.

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Psalms 25:14—“ The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant”.

Amos 3:7—“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”

It is comforting to know that God reveals His plans to those who are seeking Him. This gives them a chance to be intercessors and to plead for God’s mercy on behalf of people.

People who live their lives close to God and who are constantly in His Word are always one step ahead of others when it comes to knowing what the Lord is doing.

(e.g. Christians who aren’t in the Word faithfully are fearful about the things they see going on in the world. But Christians who are in the Word are excited about the times we live in.)

III. ABRAHAM STOOD IN THE GAP BEFORE GOD ON BEHALF OF SODOM!

Genesis 18:22b—“...but Abraham stood yet before God.”

He was an intercessor.

Having found out that God was planning on destroying Sodom and Gomorrah Abraham began to intercede on behalf of the inhabitants of those cities. Abraham of course knew that his nephew, Lot, lived in Sodom and he did not want him or his family wiped away with the wicked.

Did you know that God is still looking for people to stand before Him and intercede for both lost sinners and the righteous alike?

In Ezekiel 22:30, we see God specifically looking for intercessors. *“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”*

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The story in Ezekiel 22 has a sad ending. God was searching for an intercessor to stand before Him but found none. So God’s judgement was poured out because there was no intercessor. An intercessor has the ability to delay or stop the judgment of God when he stands in the gap. Prayers can’t be answered unless they are first offered.

The angels were already heading towards Sodom to destroy it. But Abraham still stood before the Lord. He lived in hope that God’s mercy would spare the people.

Abraham persevered! He persevered even as trouble was imminent.

As intercessors, we must continue to stand in the gap even in seemingly hopeless situations.

A. **We Must Pray Purposefully!**

Abraham had a purpose in his prayer before God.

Abraham obviously had Lot and his family in mind as he interceded..

But I believe Abraham also cared for these lost souls in Sodom. (Unlike Jonah’s attitude toward Nineveh.)

B. **We Must Pray Positively!**

(i.e. With faith)

Abraham believed God would hear his prayer. People who don’t believe that God hears their prayers just won’t bother to pray.

C. **We Must Pray Persistently!**

We can understand Abraham’s persistence as we look at his prayer to the Lord.

IV. ABRAHAM UNDERSTOOD GOD’S CHARACTER!

A. **He Knew God’s Righteous Character. (Genesis 18:23, 25)**

If you were an intercessor and wanted God to spare a city, what angle would you approach God from?

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Abraham was a smart man. He knew God's character. He knew God would not destroy the righteous with the wicked

Abraham understood that God is a righteous God and that he will do right. So, he approached God from that angle.

B. He Knew God's Gracious Character.

Abraham knew that God was a merciful and gracious God and so he dared to ask.

He negotiated with God for Sodom. Look at the number of people he needed to find in order for God to spare the city.

Vs 24 – 50 people

Vs 28 – 45 people

Vs 29 – 40 people

Vs 30 – 30 people

Vs 31 – 20 people

Vs 32 – 10 people

Abraham no doubt had Lot's family in mind when he negotiated with God for ten righteous people. I believe that Abraham was counting on Lot to at least have had a righteous influence on his family.

Count them—Lot and his wife, at least two married daughters and their husbands, two daughters who were not married, and at least two sons. But Lot failed to even influence his own family for God! (Genesis 19:12-14)

God gave him a big discount for the number of righteous people he needed to find.

He started out with 50 and ended with 10. He got a 80 % discount from God in the end, but it wasn't enough.

How many of us would even think of asking God to spare a whole city if there were only 10 people who were righteous?

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But Abraham did and God agreed.

Abraham was a great negotiator because he understood God's character.

He Knew Of God's Righteous Character.

He Knew Of God's Gracious Character.

C. He Knew Of God's Patient Character.

We see that Abraham kept asking God to lower number. He couldn't have done that without God being patient with him.

But **verse 33** shows that even Abraham knew that God's patience had an end.

We see God went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham.

Did that mean that Abraham's request had reached the limit? If God had continued to speak to Abraham, Abraham may have asked for God to spare Sodom for 5 people. But the Lord "*went his way*" the Scripture says.

The only reason any unbeliever is still alive and isn't in hell now is because of God's patient and longsuffering character.

V. GOD REMEMBERED ABRAHAM AND SPARED LOT! (Vs 29)

Because of his intercession for Sodom, Abraham had the heart of God on his side.

God didn't have to spare Lot, but He did for Abraham's sake.

I don't know about you, but I like the idea of having God inclined toward me and my family.

Abraham was the friend of God, and God spared Abraham's nephew for His friend.

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Conclusion

What a great example of intercession we see in Abraham 's life.

However, there is a greater example of one who intercedes on our behalf—His name is Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:34—“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Hebrews 7:25—“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

1 John 2:1—“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

Not only is Jesus Christ our intercessor, but the Holy Spirit is our intercessor.

Romans 8:26-27—“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

These are two great intercessors—Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. But did you know that God calls His people to this ministry of intercession also?

1 Timothy 2:1—“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;”

(e.g. Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Paul, Others)

Abraham's ministry of intercession is a good model for us to follow. Will you be an intercessor and stand before God ?