

Commentary Genesis Chapter 18 by Chuck Smith 1.29.25

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January 2025 memory verse (NKJV)

Luke 24:45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

Commentary Genesis Chapter 18 by Chuck Smith 1.29.25

And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day (Gen 18:1);

And it can get awfully hot.

And he lifted up his eyes and he looked, and, behold, there were three men who stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and he bowed himself down toward the ground, and he said, My Lord, Adonay, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort you in your hearts; and after that ye shall pass on: for therefore you are come to your servant. And they said, Do so, as you have said (Gen 18:2-5).

So the Lord was coming with two angels passing through. Abraham ran up to meet them. So really, tremendous hospitality to them. Let me get some water. Wash your feet. Let me get you something to eat. Rest awhile under the tent. It's a hot part of the day. And then continue on your journey.

In Hebrews we are told to be careful to entertain strangers. We never know but what we might be entertaining angels unaware.

Abraham hastened to make into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make quickly three measures of fine meal, and knead it, make some cakes upon the hearth (Gen 18:6).

Some good old pita bread.

And Abraham ran unto the herd, and he fetched a calf that was tender and good, and he gave it to the young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which they had dressed, and he set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat (Gen 18:7-8).

Now here's an interesting thing to me. He gave them butter and milk and meat. That's not kosher. Here's Abraham, the father of Israel not being kosher. Now the kosher law of not having milk products with meat is not a proper interpretation of the scriptures. It is one of those "straining at a gnat" things that the Pharisees loved to do. The law did

Commentary Genesis Chapter 18 by Chuck Smith 1.29.25

declare thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk. In other words, you're not to take a little goat and boil it in its mother's milk, cooking it in its own mother's milk. It was just not the right thing to do.

But the Jews have taken that as a kosher prohibition of having dairy products with meat products. Because you see, if you drink a glass of milk and you eat a steak, you don't know but that steak may have come from the calf of the mother cow from whom you drank the milk, and in your stomach it's going to seethe in that milk. And so you're seething a kid in its mother's milk. And so to be careful that you don't do that, they'll not eat cheese or any dairy products with any meat products unless the meat product be a fish. Kosher law. But it's straining at things. It's not what God intended at all. Here's Abraham being very un-kosher. And the angels were, too, because they ate it.

And they said unto him, Where is Sarah your wife? He said, She's in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it (Gen 18:9-10),

She was staying in the tent door eavesdropping on what the man was saying out there. She was behind the tent door, you know, listening and

Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women (Gen 18:11).

She's gotten through the change of life.

Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am so old shall I have the pleasure, my lord being old also (Gen 18:12)?

Calling Abraham her husband lord.

And the LORD said unto Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Surely I of a surety bear a child, shall I of surety bear a child when I'm so old? Is any thing too hard for Jehovah (Gen 18:13-14)?

Oh, what a neat question, isn't it? God said to Abraham, Behold I am God, "Is there anything too hard for me?" Paul tells us, "Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). Is there anything too hard for God? Why did Sarah laugh? Is there anything too hard for God? Why did Sarah laugh? Because she was looking at only the human possibilities. She wasn't looking at God.

It is oftentimes that we laugh at something that seems so incredible because we are only looking at the human aspects rather than looking to God Who's able to set aside human laws and human kind of restrictions or prohibitions. So she's gone through the change of life. So he's over a hundred years old. So what? Is there anything too hard for God? Why did Sarah laugh?

Commentary Genesis Chapter 18 by Chuck Smith 1.29.25

At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. And Sarah denied, saying, I didn't laugh; for she was afraid. And he said, Oh; but you did laugh. And the men rose from thence, and they looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on their way (Gen 18:14-16).

So Abraham started walking with them a bit.

And the LORD (Gen 18:17)

Now here is interesting. And the word LORD here is Jehovah, "And Jehovah."

said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do (Gen 18:17);

Now there were three who appeared as angels but one of them was Jehovah Who, of course, would have been Jesus Christ, one of the theophanies or manifestations of Jesus Christ and this is what Jesus was probably referring to. It could have been Melchizedek. This is what He was probably referring to when He said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day and saw it." Now here is Abraham talking directly with Jehovah, but not with the Father.

"No man has seen the Father at any time; but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath manifested him or made him known" (John 1:18). So this is one of the manifestations of God in the Old Testament. It is not the Father; no man has seen the Father, Jesus said, at any time. So this would be the manifestation of Jesus Christ in and as Jehovah because the name Jesus itself is Jehovah Shuah and His name in the millennium will be Jehovah Tsidkenu. And so He is manifesting and appearing here as Jehovah, talking directly to Abraham. "And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do."

Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment; that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And Jehovah said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and they went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there are fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right (Gen 18:18-25)?

Now notice Abraham as he begins to intercede with Jehovah for the city of Sodom. What is the premise? It would not be right or fair or just for God to destroy the righteous

Commentary Genesis Chapter 18 by Chuck Smith 1.29.25

with the wicked. If God's judgment is going to come upon the place, then the righteous should not share with the wicked in that judgment. If the judgment is coming for the wickedness of the people, then it would not be right for God to judge the righteous along with the wicked. That's the whole premise of his argument. And the basis for it is, "Shall not the judge of the earth do right?" It isn't fair that these righteous people should all to suffer the same penalty, the same judgment as the wicked are suffering. Would you judge the righteous with the wicked?

Now that is a very important point. And Peter picked it up in his epistle. And he speaks about how God delivered that righteous man Job who was vexed by the ways of people who were living around him. That righteous man who was vexed by the manner of life of those around him. "For God knows how to deliver the righteous, but to reserve the ungodly for the Day of Judgment" (2 Peter 2:9).

Now I bring that out because there's a lot of people who are seeking to adhere to a post-Tribulationist view. And what is the post-Tribulationist telling you? That God is going to be unfair. He is going to judge the righteous with the wicked. That the church is going to have to go through this great time of God's judgment and God's wrath being poured out upon the earth. And the very opposite premise from which Abraham was coming is being declared by these people as they declare that the church will have to go through the Great Tribulation and suffer with the wicked. That judgment and the wrath of God which is to be poured out against the wickedness of those who are dwelling upon the earth.

They are declaring that God is not just or God is not fair because Abraham's whole premise is this would not be fair, this would not be right to destroy the righteous with the wicked. "Shall not the Judge of the earth be right or do right?"

And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, I will spare the place for their sakes (Gen 18:26).

Now notice how few people it takes to forestall the judgment of God. God is so patient. If in this whole city there are fifty righteous people, the hand of judgment will be withheld. God does not delight in judgment. God delights in mercy. And just a few righteous people can be a saving influence in a whole community of wickedness. Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). And so God has you as a saving influence, as a savory influence in the community. And it doesn't take many; just a few can withhold the judgment of God.

Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord [Adonay here], which am but dust and ashes (Gen 18:27):

Hey, I'm just dust and ashes but I have, I'm actually taking upon myself to talk to God.

Peradventure what if there is only five less from the fifty: will you destroy the city because you're just lacking five? The Lord said, If there are forty-five, I'll not destroy it.

Commentary Genesis Chapter 18 by Chuck Smith 1.29.25

He spake to him again, he said, Peradventure there will only be forty found there. And he said, I'll not destroy it for forty. Oh, don't be angry with me, I'm going to speak: What again what if there is just thirty righteous there. He said, I'll not destroy it for thirty. What if perhaps there's only twenty? I'll not destroy it for twenty (Gen 18:28-31).

Make the best deal you can.

And he said, Oh don't be angry with me, I'm going to speak but one more time: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake (Gen 18:32).

Abraham thought surely I can find ten. There's Lot, his two sons, and his daughters, and families, all right you know. This is an interesting picture of intercession. Abraham standing, interceding for these people, for this city of which the judgment of God is about to fall. Beautiful picture of intercession.

And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned to his place (Gen 18:33).

So two weeks, we'll find out what happened to Sodom. Oh, you're supposed to read ahead anyhow. Next five chapters. The beautiful picture of intercession. But the principle is the thing I wanted to point out. The Lord knows how to deliver the righteous. Of course, you know they didn't find ten. They found one righteous man.

Now one thing I want to point out when the judgment came, he went to his children and he begged them to leave, but they laughed at him. They mocked him. Oh, God's not going to judge this place. This has been going on for a long time. Though he, Lot himself, was able to escape the pollutions, his children were not, and his move to Sodom cost him his family. He was strong even. He withheld against the vileness and pollution of the area, but his children could not withstand and he lost his children through the move. Very tragic indeed. They fell into the culture and sin of Sodom and were destroyed.

But getting back to the principle, will God destroy the righteous with the wicked, and the answer of God was negative. No, He would not destroy the righteous with the wicked. So what did God do to the righteous man before he destroyed the wicked? He led that righteous Lot out before He destroyed the city. Even before the wrath and the judgment of God will come upon the earth, He will lead the righteous out. For the Lord knoweth how to deliver the righteous, but to reserve the ungodly for the day of judgment. The Day of Judgment is coming upon the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness, but it would not be fair for the God of the earth to destroy the righteous with the wicked.

I consider the post-tribulationists' view as being inconsistent with the very nature of the loving righteous God. And the rapture totally consistent with His righteous nature and with the history of delivering the righteous out before the judgment came.

Commentary Genesis Chapter 18 by Chuck Smith 1.29.25

We'll get into that more as we press on. Shall we stand?

Now may the Lord be with you, bless you and keep you. May the Lord cause His face to shine upon you and give you peace. May your heart be filled with his love. May you walk in the Spirit and may you be strengthened by the work of His Holy Spirit in your inner man. May you be increased in knowledge and understanding of His Word and of His will and of His purposes for your life that you might walk before the Lord in a way that is pleasing unto Him. And may God increase your faith and your trust. May He work in your life in a very beautiful way as He nurtures you and as He leads you into that path of fellowship with Himself. May your life be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus.

And may the Lord and the blessings of the Lord be upon you while we are absent from each other until we are brought back together again to continue our fellowship and our growing together in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.