

Genesis 18:16-33 – Covenant Headship: Blessings and Pleadings

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Henry, Calvin, Delitzsch, Pulpit, Poole, PasN, GreekLexicon, Trapp, Whytock,
Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: In this sermon you will see with one of the special blessings Abraham received and one aspect of his covenant responsibility that he fulfilled as covenant head.

Our headings are: **Covenant Headship: A Blessings**, and **Covenant Headship: The Pleadings**. 求情

Our goals are: That you will **learn to appreciate the promises of the Lord to you, his covenant people, in his Word**, and that you **will get a stronger desire to fulfill you covenant responsibilities**, knowing that you are a child of God redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God and equipped to serve him.

Covenant Headship – A Blessings

16 Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. 17 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18 "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

1. The Lord Jesus, 1 of the 3 angels who visited Abraham, revealed to the other 2 angels that he was going to give a special revelation to Abraham. He was going to explain to Abraham what he was going to do to Sodom (where Abraham's nephew lived) and Gomorrah.

2. Why did God reveal this information to Abraham?

a. **Abraham was God's friend and in a covenant** 公约 **relationship with the Lord.** So this revelation would testify of that closeness – that love he had for Abraham. Friends tell each other personal things.

b. **God wanted to show him what the wicked deserved, yet God would preserve Abraham,** through whom would pass the Line of Promise. This would strengthen Abraham's faith in God.

Psalm 25:14 The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.

By the way, Archaeologists believe that they have found the ruins of Sodom or Gomorrah on the coast of the Dead Sea. The ruins indicate destruction by fire, and the archaeologists speculate that volcanic activity may have been the proximate cause of this great destruction.

c. **God wanted Abraham to teach of his covenant love to his covenant children.** This would help his children to guard the ways of the Lord and remain pure. You can tell from this that Abraham was not a figure head. He was the living, breathing, head of his family, so it was his duty to teach them God's Word so that they might faithfully obey the covenant. Abraham had to teach his children so that they would continue doing righteousness and performing justice. (V19) Righteousness refers to conformity to God's law. Justice is the impartial application of that law. There was one more reason for this revelation that you will see in the next main point.

3. Ultimately, however, the fullest revelation and its duties were in Jesus Christ – who was the Word of God personified. He taught perfectly the Word of God. He perfectly obeyed the Word of God.

John 15:15 "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Jesus took the punishment for man breaking the Law of God. And then God counted all his good words as yours. God declared you righteous. He justified you. Abraham's children failed to live up to the ideals of the covenant, so Christ had to come to do what they didn't and could not do.

4. Brothers and sisters, there is no excuse to have an ignorant Christian child. (What is an ignorant covenant child? And ignorant covenant child is one who does not know that Christ came to take the place of sinners on the cross...and one who does not know how to live to please the Lord in all

areas of his life.) If you don't teach your child you are keeping him ignorant of the most important things. More, if you don't properly teach your child the Word of God, you will regret it. Let it not be that your child is equipped in science, but not equipped in self-defense to face the Devil who is out to steal your child's joy, kill his body, and destroy his soul.

Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers, do not provoke 挑畔 your children, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

Proverbs 10:21 The lips of the righteous feed many, But fools die for lack of wisdom.

As a honey bee brings back nectar to his family, so you are to bring God's Word to yours. The way to get more is to share what you have. Show kindness and God will bless you more. Hide your gift and you will lose it. Luke 8:18.

20 And the LORD said, "Because **the outcry against Sodom** and Gomorrah is great, and because **their sin is very grave,** 21 "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know." 22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

5. And what was God's revelation to Abraham: He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, where Abraham's nephew lived, because of the greatness of Sodom's sins. And God was going to "go down and see..." – which is anthropomorphism. Of course the Lord knew the fullness of Sodom's sin. He simply wanted to prove to man the degree of sinfulness by using human methods. You'll see this human proof of Sodom's sinfulness later when the angels visit Sodom.

6. What about this "outcry" for justice on Sodom? This was an outcry from God's people calling for justice. This is similar to the responsibility you have to call for God to help bad people, bad churches, and bad nations to repent...or if they would not repent, you call on God to destroy them. Wickedness hinders the Gospel from spreading...and worship becomes lacking. So praying for God's justice on the wicked who refuse to repent is for the glory of God. (Imprecatory Psalms)

Covenant Headship – The Pleadings

23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 "Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked 邪恶, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" 26 So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes." 27 Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: 28 "Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it." 29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty." 30 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." 31 And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty." 32 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." 33 So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

1. Now that important other reason God gave this revelation of Abraham: God wanted Abraham to plead for the covenant people of Sodom...and maybe even for the salvation of the wicked as well.

2. But in order for Abraham to make this prayer, he came near to Jehovah. This fact of coming near to God was not just put in there to make the Bible longer. This was to point out the basis on which you pray: You must be near to God. You are near God through Christ's adoption of you.

Psalm 73:28 - But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, That I may declare all Your works.

Hebrews 10:21-22 - and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Psalm 140:13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; The upright shall dwell in Your presence.

And you must draw near to God not just by your body or by your words...but by faith in Christ.
Isaiah 29:23-14 - Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths
And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me...

3. Look at the nature and details of Abraham's prayer. It is in the form of a plea.

a. Abraham pleaded that God might save Sodom by virtue of the righteous people in Sodom. He understood that if the earth loses its saltiness, it will rot and putrefy.

Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

As Christians, you are the reason this world survives today. You have Christ's righteousness.

b. Abraham pleaded for souls – not for good health, more money, or cattle...but for souls.

c. Abraham is theologically correct in his prayer. He prayed that the godly would not get destroyed with the wicked. Of course Abraham knew there was not one good, etc...but he is referring to God's usual way of showing mercy to his children. (Also, John 6:39) God always finds a way to preserve his people. Praise his for his earthly as well as for his eternal preservation.

John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

He rightly identified the fact that Jesus is a righteous judge. He had his theology correct.

Acts 10:42 - "And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.

d. Abraham was persistent in his prayer. He pleaded for 50, then 45, then 30, then 20, then 10. Do you use this gift of prayer so passionately and persistently? I trust you do!

e. Abraham was humble in prayer. Consider the some of his words: He was in "dust and ashes." He said: "Let not the Lord be angry with me."

f. Abraham acted as an advocate for God's people, showing his love and showing his covenant headship. Shame on you if you don't pray for your children and pray for them in case they sin – as Job. Further, are your prayers quite self-centered? Your pains and sickness...your new job...your house...your parents... your growth in grace...Or are you prayers mainly for others? Yes, pray for yourself...but don't forget to pray for others as well.

4. Having received what he thought was a good answer from Jesus, Abraham stopped praying for Sodom. He thought all was taken care of. Lot had two daughters, two sons, and his wife. According to his count, they were safe. It would be easy to find 10...or so Abraham thought.

5. Jesus was remarkably patient with Abraham when he prayed for the wicked Sodom, wasn't he? What a good Lord he is!

Conclusion:

God elected Abraham and established him as head of his family. As covenant head, and as a friend of God, God related truth to him of what he was doing to do to Sodom. As a result of that revelation, Abraham taught these truths to his family and he prayed for his family and also for the preservation of the covenant people in Sodom. Abraham's prayer is marked by faith in God... knowing that God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly...Abraham is persistent in prayer. God heard Abraham's prayer because Abraham was his son and his friend and because Abraham prayed through Jesus Christ.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You have God's revealed Words today. 1. You know how you are to live to please God and run your family. 2. You know how to survive and even thrive under trials. 3. You know how to help the weak in a way that is right...not necessarily how they may want you to help them. 4. You know how to pray...to pray for those who need guidance how to live...to pray for those who are under trials...to pray for wisdom to run your families. And how did this word (Revelation) come to you? The Word comes through the Word of God- Jesus Christ – just as it came to Abraham. Jesus taught you what you must know and what you must believe. And then Jesus died on the cross to make you able to believe...and have the desire to life in conformity to his Word. Praise the Lord. You can only do what you must do through Christ Jesus.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, might I encourage you to read God's Words so you might find, as we have found, the Words of life – that Christ died for the sins of the world, not just the Jews. And then pray that God might accept that awesome death of Christ, as your death. This is for your good and his glory.