**Genesis 18: Abraham’s Visitors / Abraham Intercedes for Sodom**

***“The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oak of Mamre, as he sat in the entrance of his tent, while the day was growing hot. Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them; and bowing to the ground, he said: ‘Sir, if it please you, do not go on past your servant.’”*** *(Genesis 18:1-3)*

* This appearance of God to Abraham is strange for the three men stand for God.
* When Abraham speaks to them sometimes, he addresses them in the singular as if there was only one person there.
* Sometimes he addresses them in the plural as if there were three.
* Many of the early church fathers interpreted this appearance of God as an early announcement of the mystery of the Holy Trinity.
* As Christians we believe that there is one God with three distinctive persons.
* That Abraham bowed himself to the earth indicates that he recognized these three men as God.

***“’Where is your wife, Sarah?’ they asked him. ‘There in the tent,’ he replied. One of them said, ‘I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.’ Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, just behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years, and Sarah had stopped having her menstrual periods. So Sarah laughed to herself and said, ‘Now that I am worn out and my husband is old, am I still to have sexual pleasure?’ But the Lord said to Abraham: ‘Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really bear a child, old as I am?’ Is anything too marvelous for the Lord to do?”*** *(Genesis 18:9-14)*

* In the previous chapter it was Abraham who fell on his face and laughed when God told him that He would give him a son by Sarah.
* Now it is Sarah who laughs when the Lord tells Abraham that Sarah will bear him a son.
* In Hebrew the name Isaac means “one who laughs” or “one who rejoices”.
* The Lord has advised them that Sarah’s son’s name will be Isaac. The name Isaac will remind them that they laughed at God’s promise to give them a son.

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom (Gen 18:16-33)

***“As the men turned and walked toward Sodom, Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then Abraham drew near and said: ‘Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous people in the city; would you really sweep away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people within it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to kill the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike! Far be it from you! Should not the judge of the world do what is just?’ The Lord replied: ‘If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake. Abraham spoke up again: ‘See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord, though I am only dust and ashes! What if there are five less then fifty righteous people? Will you destroy the whole city because of those five? I will not destroy it, he answered, if I find forty-five there.’ But Abraham persisted, saying, ‘What if only forty are found there?’ He replied, ‘I will refrain from doing it for the sake of the forty.’ Then he said, ‘Do not let my Lord be angry if I go on. What if only thirty are found there?’ He replied, ‘I will refrain from doing it if I can find thirty there.’ Abraham went on, ‘Since I have thus presumed to speak to my Lord, what if there are no more than twenty?’ I will not destroy it he answered, for the sake of the twenty. But he persisted: ‘Please, do not let the Lord be angry if I speak up this last time. What if ten are found there? For the sake of the ten, he replied, I will not destroy it.’ The Lord departed as soon as he had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned home.”*** *(Genesis 18:22-33)*

* *“Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”*
* Abraham’s intercession for Sodom is a model of prayer.
* Abraham acknowledges that he is but ashes and dust. He acknowledges his dependence on God.
* The scripture indicates that when Abraham addressed God, Abraham came near to God.
* Effective intercession is a matter of drawing near to God and to pray with our heart.
* Abraham reminds the Lord that He is the judge of righteousness. Abraham appeals to God’s nature and principles.
* When interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham argues in terms of collective responsibility.
* The entire people shared the same fate even though not all of them sinned.
* If there were enough just people in the city, God would not have destroyed it.
* Collective responsibility also shows how the salvation of many came through the salvation of the few.

The Navarre Bible; Pentateuch; Genesis 18; Scepter Publishers; New York; 1986

[Enduring Word Bible Commentary Genesis Chapter 18](https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-18/)

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