

Message Seven

Living in Fellowship with God

Scripture Reading: Gen. 18;
2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23

- I. “Jehovah appeared to him [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them”—Gen. 18:1-2:**
- A. One of these three men was Jehovah God as Christ (vv. 13-14, 22); the other two were angels (v. 22; 19:1).
 - B. After he was circumcised and his natural strength was terminated, Abraham lived in intimate fellowship with God and became God’s friend—2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23.
- II. The glorious intercession that Abraham made before God was not a prayer from man on earth to God in heaven; it was a human, intimate conversation between two friends, an intimate talk according to the unveiling of God’s heart’s desire—Rom. 4:12; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23; S. S. 1:1-4; Rev. 2:17; Gen. 18; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8:**
- A. Even before the incarnation (John 1:14) Jehovah as Christ appeared to Abraham in a human form, with a human body, and communed with him on a human level (Gen. 13:18; 18:1-2, 13-15).
 - B. As Abraham was enjoying sweet fellowship with God, he received a revelation from Him regarding the birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom—vv. 9-22:
 - 1. The birth of Isaac is related to Christ, and the destruction of Sodom is related to God’s judgment upon sin; this means that Christ must come in and that sin must go out.
 - 2. This shows that God’s intention is to work Christ into us, to bring Christ forth through us, and to destroy the “Sodom” in our home life, in our work life, and in our Christian and church life—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; 1 Cor. 5:8.
 - 3. In our intimate fellowship with God, we receive the revelation that all the impossibilities become possibilities with Christ—Gen. 18:14; Luke 18:27.

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- C. God revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom, because He was seeking an intercessor—Gen. 18:17-22; cf. Heb. 7:25; Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30:
1. While God intended to destroy Sodom, His heart was concerned for Lot, who was dwelling in Sodom—Gen. 13:12; 14:12; 19:1.
 2. God wanted to save Lot in order to protect Christ's genealogy through Ruth, a Moabitess and a descendant of Lot (v. 37; Ruth 1:4; Matt. 1:5), but He could not do so without an intercessor.
 3. Thus, in His intimate fellowship with Abraham, in a mysterious way, without mentioning Lot's name, God revealed His heart's desire; Abraham's purpose in standing before Jehovah was to intercede for Lot—Gen. 18:22.
- D. Genesis 18 presents a clear revelation of the basic principles of intercession:
1. The proper intercession is not initiated by man but by God's revelation; thus, proper intercession expresses God's desire and carries out God's will—vv. 17, 20-21; 19:27-29; Psa. 27:4-8; Heb. 4:16; 7:25; James 5:17.
 2. Apparently, Abraham was interceding for Sodom; actually, he was interceding for Lot by implication (Gen. 14:12; 18:23; 19:1, 27-29), showing that we should intercede for God's people who have drifted into the world.
 3. Intercession is an intimate conversation with God according to the inward intention of His heart; for this we must learn to linger in the presence of God—18:22-33; Matt. 6:6.
 4. Intercession is according to God's righteous way:
 - a. In Abraham's intercession for Lot, he did not beg God according to His love and grace; he challenged God according to His righteous way.
 - b. God's righteousness binds Him much more than His love and grace do—Gen. 18:23-25; Rom. 1:17.
 5. Abraham's intercession did not terminate with Abraham's speaking but with God's, showing that genuine intercession is God's speaking in our speaking—Gen. 18:33; John 15:7; Rom. 8:26-27.

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III. To maintain our living in fellowship with God, we need to overcome the stupefying effect of the world's indulgent living—Luke 17:26-32; Gen. 19:

- A. Lot became defeated because he separated himself from Abraham, with whom was God's witness and testimony, and drifted into the wicked city of Sodom—13:5-13; 14:12; 2 Pet. 2:6-9.
- B. Ur of Chaldea as a place of idols, Egypt as a place of worldly riches and pleasures, and Sodom as a city of sin form a triangular boundary around the land of Canaan; God's called ones live within this triangle and must be careful lest they fall back to the city of idols, go down to the place of worldly pleasures, or drift into the city of sin—Jer. 2:13; 1 John 5:21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.
- C. In their giving up God, the wicked Sodomites were given up by God to "passions of dishonor"; this is the ultimate issue of man's rebelling against God and rejecting his conscience—Gen. 19:4-11; Rom. 1:21-27; 2:14-15; 1 Tim. 4:2:
 - 1. In God's complete salvation we can be washed from all the sinful things of Sodom, sanctified by God, and justified, accepted, by God—1 Cor. 6:9-11.
 - 2. If we glorify God, thank God, worship God, and serve God, we will be protected from every kind of evil—Rom. 1:21, 25.
- D. Lot's willingness to sacrifice his two virgin daughters to satisfy the Sodomites' lust shows that Lot, having dwelt a considerable time in the sinful city of Sodom, had lost his sense of morality and shame—Gen. 19:8, 11-13, 30-38:
 - 1. Throughout the whole world the sense of shame and morality has been drugged; because most of the young people were raised in a sinful atmosphere, their senses have been drugged—1 John 5:19.
 - 2. But if they would come into the church life and remain in its pure atmosphere for a few months, they would never return to the sinful world.
 - 3. We all must escape Sodom and shut our doors to its evil atmosphere.
- E. Lot had no willingness to escape from the evil and condemned city, but the Lord was merciful, pulling him out of Sodom like wood plucked out of a fire—Gen. 19:16; cf. Zech. 3:2; Jude 19-23.

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- F. “Remember Lot’s wife” is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers—Luke 17:31-32; Gen. 19:15-17, 26; Luke 14:34-35; 1 John 2:27-28.