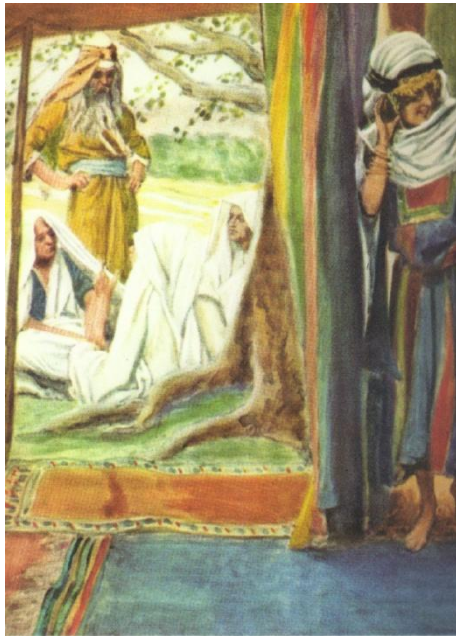


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 3



ABRAHAM AND HIS THREE VISITORS

Scripture Text: Genesis 18

In the days before God had given a written Bible, He spoke to men audibly. On some special occasions, He appeared to them, as in today's lesson.

Three men came to Abraham. One was Jesus Christ. The other two were types of the Word and Spirit in the form of angels. Abraham welcomed them. The Lord promised to send Isaac. Commanding one's children to do right permits God to bless them. God cannot bear sin. Prayer changes things.

We may think the command to be hospitable to be a small matter of importance. Yet it is God's command and to be obeyed. Abraham would have missed great blessings if he had not opened his home and heart to these visitors. Can you tell instances when the sharing of comforts with wayfarers may have brought the giving or receiving of rich and far-

reaching blessings, perhaps the saving of souls?

MEMORY VERSE: *Ah Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.*

—*Jeremiah 32:17*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**Genesis 13** Abraham's generosity to Lot.

Tue.—**Jeremiah 32:16-25** Jeremiah's prayer.

Wed.—**Jeremiah 32:26-40** The Lord's answer to his prayer.

Thu.—**Psalms 25** A prayer of trust.

Fri.—**Psalms 65** Living in communion with God.

Devotional Reading: **Luke 18:1-8** Jesus teaches importunity in prayer.

God Promises Abraham a Son

Genesis 18:1-15 The Lord appeared unto him—to Abraham. This undoubtedly was the Son, later named Jesus—it was the Lord. **Three men stood by him . . . he ran to meet them . . . bowed himself . . . And said . . . pass not away . . .** Abraham gave them a welcome. He was hospitable, as we are commanded to be (**1 Peter 4:9**). No doubt, this is the reference in **Hebrews 13:2**. Abraham furnished them water to wash their feet, and food—cakes, meat, butter, and milk. Abraham went to much inconvenience to show hospitality to the men.

Where is Sarah thy wife? Her name had recently been changed from Sarai—meaning *my princess*—to Sarah, *princess* (**Genesis 17:15**). She no longer belonged to Abraham only. She was mother of a nation. **Sarah thy wife shall have a son.** Sarah, ninety years old, thought it impossible. She **laughed within herself**. Abraham had also laughed (**Genesis 17:17**) when, shortly before, he had been given the same promise. Man's small, limited mind finds it difficult to comprehend the greatness of God's power. But, **Is anything too hard for the LORD?** No, nothing! (**Luke 1:37**.) Then the Lord repeated the promise to send Isaac. It was certain and sure. Isaac was a necessary part of His plan to carry on the covenant.

Sarah was hidden in the tent behind the Lord. She did not laugh aloud but inwardly. She thought He would not know. It frightened her that He did know. Then she denied. Still, He knew. Are we like Sarah sometimes, thinking we can hide something from God? This is impossible. She thought what God said was impossible.

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LESSON 3

Judgment of Sodom

Genesis 18:16-31 The men rose up—the Lord and two angels (see **Genesis 18:22** and **Genesis 19:1**). They **looked toward Sodom**, where Lot lived, Abraham's nephew (**Genesis 13:11-13**). Abraham counted it a privilege to walk a part of the way with them. As they walked, the Lord considered whether He should tell Abraham His purpose concerning Sodom. He found no reason not to. Abraham was to **become a great . . . nation**, all nations were to be **blessed in him**, and he would **command his children . . . after him** to do right. Therefore, He decided to tell Abraham.

Abraham was to become a great and mighty nation. This was dependent upon how he raised his children. God knew he would command them after him. He would teach them what he knew of the Lord. He would not only teach them, but he would train them so they would **keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment** in order that **the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken**.

The future of any people rests in its children. It is without question that our great nation, America, is taking the downward way. The tide could yet be turned by the general practice of DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP and by both TEACHING and TRAINING the children to **keep the way of the LORD**. One may not be able to make it general, but each of us is responsible for the children under our influence.

The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great . . . their sin is very grievous. God notices what people do. What people do is dictated by the condition of the heart. God cannot bear to look at sin. Sin stirs God's wrath. **I will go down now, and see**—to see if the cry rightly represented the sin of the cities. **The men . . . went toward Sodom**. The two angels were God's agents to investigate. They were a type of the Word and the Spirit of God. Without them, souls cannot be drawn and led out of sin and destruction. The angels had business in Sodom—to draw people out of the destruction which God would bring on the sin and division. The Lord had business with Abraham. He abides. He knew Abraham's heart and his concern for Lot who dwelt in Sodom. Standing together, while the angels left on their mission to Sodom, the Lord showed Abraham His plan to destroy the wicked cities. Abraham pled with the Lord for the righteous that might be in Sodom. He reasoned that they should not be destroyed with the wicked. His plea to the Lord was to spare the place if **fifty righteous** be found there. He continued pleading, lowering the number to forty-five, and then on down to ten.

For Ten's Sake

Genesis 18:32-33 Peradventure ten shall be found there. The Lord granted each request. **I will not destroy it for ten's sake**. The Lord did not stop granting, but there Abraham stopped asking. What a lesson on prayer we have here—(1) the value of perseverance (**James 5:16**), (2) the loving mercy of God in hearing and granting requests, and (3) the responsibility of saints to pray, since so much power is carried by prayer. Notice upon what God allowed the fate of thousands of wicked people to depend—the prayers of one righteous man. Were ten found? No. What might have been the result had Abraham spoken yet once more and asked for FOUR? How many are dependent upon our faithfulness and persistent prayers?

JUST A THOUGHT

Marriage is often a case where cupidity meets stupidity.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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