

## “If I was God...” (Genesis 18:16-33)

One of the facts that humans have yet to master is that we cannot outperform God. In the movie *Patch Adams*, the main character (Robin Williams) is an unconventional medical student who believes that humor and compassion are the most important tools of the doctor’s trade. His idealism is shattered when his girlfriend, who has helped him start a free clinic based on these principles, is murdered by one of the psychotic patients. As Patch stands on a high cliff pondering suicide, he has the following monologue with God:

So answer me please—tell me what You’re doing... You can create man, man suffers enormous amounts of pain; man dies. Maybe You should have had just a few more brainstorming sessions prior to creation. You rested on the seventh day—maybe You should have spent that day on compassion.

As he looks down into the valley far below, again considering the possibility of jumping, he says, tragically, “You know what? You’re not worth it.”

These same sentiments resound like an incessant gong throughout our society. Talk to any person on the street and you will likely hear doubts about the fairness of God doing this or that. In today’s climate of tolerance, many reject the God of the Bible as an ogre. Sadly, many Christians unknowingly do the same. Whenever we raise questions about God’s justice we suggest, as Patch Adams did, that we would be more just if given the chance. When we question God’s love we imply that we can be more loving. When we question His grace, His mercy, His patience—name whatever attribute you will—if we think we can do them better than God, we have a defective view of God.<sup>1</sup>

A.W. Tozer said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”<sup>2</sup> So what comes to your mind when you think about God? Do you question Him? Do you doubt His love for you? Or do you trust Him and find your confidence in Him? Wherever you fall on this scale, God wants to increase your view of Him because right Christian living comes out of right Christian thinking. In Genesis 18:16-33, we need to stop and reflect on our view of God. First, we must...

**1. Understand God’s purposes and plans (18:16-21).** This section inaugurates a break from fellowship to judgment. After eating at “Abe’s All You Can Eat Steakhouse” (18:1-15), Abraham and the three men walk off their meal. Notice that Abraham didn’t just wave good-bye to his visitors. He walked with them awhile to “send them off” (18:16). It was during this time that Abraham learned about Sodom. If he hadn’t taken the time to walk with them he would have never had the opportunity to understand God’s purposes and plans. This is a simple principle: If we do not make time to spend with the Lord we will not understand His ways and will be confused in our thinking about Him (Isa 55:8-9). We can’t build a relationship with God “on the fly.” If we are going to attempt to understand God’s ways, we need to make time to do so. When we make time to be with the Lord, His will and His plans are revealed to us.

During this farewell jaunt, the Lord said, “**Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?**” (18:17-18)<sup>3</sup> The Lord chooses to disclose His intentions to Abraham because he is to be a channel of blessing to all the nations of the earth (12:2a; 13:3b). Additionally, Abraham is the only man in Scripture that is called God’s “friend” (2 Chron 20:7; Isa 41:8; Jas 2:23); and good friends share intimate secrets with each other.<sup>4</sup> This is an important truth. There is a difference between a servant and a friend. A servant may not know his master’s purposes, but a friend does (John 15:15).<sup>5</sup> In John 14-15, Jesus invites disciples to enjoy friendship with Him. Yet, He explains that friendship is conditional—it is based on obedience (14:21, 23). Can you say that you are actively and intentionally seeking to obey Christ in very area of your life? Do you long to be His friend? If so, tell Him today of your intent to obey Him and become more intimate.

In 18:19, the Lord further explains His purposes for Abraham: **“For I have chosen (lit., “known”) him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”** Abraham was chosen to be a blessing to the whole earth (12:2-3), but his vocation was to begin to take effect in the simplest way. He was called to **“command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD.”**<sup>6</sup> His being a blessing to the world depended on his being a blessing to his own home. Do you share this priority? Does your heart resonate with God’s fatherly heart? Have you spent the necessary time this past week investing well in your children? Are you helping them to **“keep the way of the LORD?”** There is no greater task that parents must fulfill.

It is important to recognize that grace was not transmitted automatically to Abraham’s offspring, but through godly parenting<sup>7</sup> (Deut 6:6-9; Ps 132:11-12; see also Eph 6:4). This is a general rule today as well. One of my daily prayers is that Lori and I would do four things for our children: (1) pray for them, (2) instruct them, (3) exemplify Christ, and (4) discipline them.<sup>8</sup> The acrostic “PIED” helps me to remember these critical prayers. While I believe that any success in parenting is the result of God’s grace, I also believe that God requires parents to be faithful in this most important stewardship. In my experience, it is usually parental failure in one of these four areas that causes children to not keep the way of the Lord. Parents, this reality ought to shake us to our core. In which of these four areas are you weak? Are you committed to grow in a particular area? Jesus was deeply concerned about the spiritual health and maturity of children. In all three synoptic Gospels, He declared, “whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt 18:6; cf. Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2). These are sobering words for parents.

The Lord further tells Abraham that he will accomplish this task by training his children in **“doing righteousness and justice”** (cf. Mic 6:8). As we shall see, these desired behaviors are contrasted with the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:20-21). Like Abraham, we are to instruct our children in **“doing righteousness and justice.”** This means explaining to them what God expects of His followers when it comes to right living and justice and then providing them opportunities to fulfill God’s commands. This may lead to ministering together as a family in capacities that carry out righteousness and justice.

The last phrase in 18:19: **“so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him,”**<sup>9</sup> emphasizes the conditional aspect of God’s unconditional covenant with Abraham. If Abraham and his descendants are to personally enjoy the benefits of the covenant, they must follow God’s commandments. Like Abraham, if we are to enjoy our fellowship with God, we must obey Jesus. When we do we experience the abundant life (John 10:10). Today, is this your experience? Or do you feel worried and miserable? God wants you to experience all that He has for you but it takes place as you obey His will. Right Christian living comes out of right Christian thinking.

In 18:20-21, the Lord continues to speak, **“The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.<sup>10</sup> I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.”** We naturally think of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah as largely sexual in nature. After all, Sodom provides the basic word (sodomy) for sins outside of normal sexuality. But if we imagine the sins of these cities only in sexual terms, we miss the depth of their depravity. The word for **“outcry”**<sup>11</sup> is used in Scripture to describe the cries of the oppressed and brutalized. It is used for the cry of the oppressed widow or orphan (Exod 22:22-23), the cry of the oppressed servant (Deut 24:15), and the cries of Israel in Egypt (Exod 2:23; 3:7, 9).<sup>12</sup> This is confirmed by Ezekiel who described the inhabitants of Sodom: “Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it” (Ezek 16:49-50).

There is an equation in this passage that is instructive:

Arrogance + abundant food + careless ease = a lack of concern to help the poor and the needy.

This eventually led to haughtiness and “abominations” (the sins we usually equate with Sodom).<sup>13</sup> Yes, Sodom was sexually depraved (2 Pet 2:6-7; Jude 7); but there were also no human rights. The poor, the needy, and the defenseless were especially brutalized. Why? Because Israel was arrogant, had abundant food, and careless ease. (See NIV: “overfed and unconcerned.”) The application is clear, although it will not be popular: Most of us are proud and idle people who need to go on a diet!

The sad reality is “abundant food” leads to “arrogance” and “careless ease.” However, few of us worry about how much we eat or how much our fellow believers eat. Gluttony seems to be one of the few acceptable sins in our churches. We might condemn the abuse of alcohol and smoking as sins against our bodies, the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). Yet we refuse to preach against overeating, poor diets, and obesity, even when the temples of the Holy Spirit in our churches start to look more like amphitheaters.

No, this is not a pitch for the South Beach or Atkins diet. My point is that we forget that our bodies, spirits, and actions are intricately intertwined. If we grow arrogant or complacent in our hearts, our prayers wane and we forget about the needs of others around us. We begin to care less about others, whether they’re across the street, across cultural barriers, or across oceans. And if we allow ourselves to live as “overfed” people—with no apparent curbing of our gluttonous appetites—it follows that we will lose a sense of concern for others. How apathetic and sleepy we get when our bellies are too full.

Ezekiel’s condemnation of those who were arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned for the poor has forced me to scrutinize my own life to make sure my appetites are not dulling my spiritual senses and numbing my compassion. The greatest evaluation of whether we’re guilty of the sin of Sodom is whether we’re genuinely hospitable to poor people.<sup>14</sup>

In 18:21, the Lord declares, “**I will go down and see...**”<sup>15</sup> He is not going down to learn the facts; He already knows everything (Job 38-39; Ps 139). This is Moses’ figurative way of saying that God always thoroughly investigates the crime before passing sentence (see 3:11-13; 4:9-12; 11:5).<sup>16</sup> By this He assures Abraham that He would base His judgment on full, accurate information He already perfectly knew.<sup>17</sup>

In this verse, we must come to grips with the reality that God personally observes sin (18:21). The Hebrew text literally states, “I will go down personally and see if their sin is made complete.” Sin has been building up in Sodom. God has delayed judgment because of His love and mercy. More sin builds up. Now the cup of sin has been filled, and God moves in judgment. And He does it personally. He does not send angels or other messengers. He does not judge sin on what others report. He does not judge the observations of His assistants. He does it Himself. He never delegates the matter of judgment.<sup>18</sup>

I need to ask a very sobering question: How much sin would you carry out if God was sitting next to you? Most Christians would not want to sin in the presence of God, yet we do so constantly. Could it be that we don’t recognize the nearness of God? In our busyness and stress, we commit all kinds of sin without realizing that we are doing so in the face of God. Yes, not only is He looking down and observing our lives; He’s also living inside us (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19).

[We have been urged to understand God’s purposes and plans. Now we will be challenged to...]

**2. Understand God's justice and grace (18:22-33).** In 18:22-23, Moses writes, **"Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the LORD."**<sup>19</sup> **Abraham came near and said, 'Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?'"**<sup>20</sup> The two angels leave and the Lord remains with Abraham. Abraham then **"came near"**<sup>21</sup> and began praying.<sup>22</sup> The principle is this: Effective prayer is a matter of drawing near to God so we can pray with His heart. In this section, Abraham, the friend of God, becomes a true friend of men.<sup>23</sup> Earlier Abraham was the savior of Sodom (14:13-16); now he becomes Sodom's intercessor.<sup>24</sup> To "intercede" is to plead the case of another person. When a friend speaks up on behalf of a student about to be punished, that friend is interceding. Here, Abraham's relationship with God had taken on a new dimension—concern for someone other than himself. The previous dialogues between Abraham and God (Gen 12, 15, 17) had all concerned the covenant promises and Abraham's need for assurance that the promises were true and irrevocable.<sup>25</sup>

In his willingness to be an intercessor Abraham is like Jesus, because the greatest intercessor of all time is Jesus. He is interceding for us even now (Rom 8:26-27). Every Christian can know that Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father interceding for him. Jesus prays for exactly the right things for us. He prays that we might be kept from being captured by Satan, that we might be kept in unity, and that our faith might continue. The reason why the Christian survives at all is because he has a great Intercessor. Yet Jesus' intercession is also done through His church. By His Spirit He leads us to pray for each other. Praying for others in this way is one of the greatest things we can ever do. Prayer is also one of the most unselfish things you can ever do. It identified with God and with Jesus. It is truly Christlike.<sup>26</sup> Abraham is never more like God than at the moment he is praying for Sodom. His prayer did not save the city, and it was never intended to do so, but it did make Abraham manifest in his own life the mercy and the compassion of God. This is why God asks us to pray, that we might take upon ourselves something of His own character.

In 18:24-25, Abraham says, **"Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"** Abraham's primary purpose seems to have been to secure justice (i.e., deliverance) for the righteous minority in their wicked cities. Secondly, he wanted God to spare the cities. This interpretation finds support in Abraham's appeal to the justice of God rather than to His mercy (18:25). This appeal was the basis of his intercession. Abraham was jealous for the Lord's reputation among his neighbors. If this was his primary purpose, Abraham succeeded in obtaining justice for the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>27</sup>

In 18:26, the dialogue continues. The Lord replies, **"If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account."** To save the cities for ten righteous showcases God's amazing grace. Although He is a God of justice (Deut 32:4), His grace is all-encompassing and all-surpassing. When we ponder this truth it will affect our lives. Right Christian living comes out of right Christian thinking.

In 18:27 Abraham replies, **"Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes."** Abraham models profound deference and humility when he says, **"I am but dust and ashes."** By this he means, dust in origin, ashes at the end. We ought to approach God with this same reverence and awe.

In 18:28-29, Abraham says, **"Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five?"** **And He said, 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.'** **He spoke to Him yet again and said, 'Suppose forty are found there?'** **And He said, 'I will not do it on account of the forty.'"** Abraham turns into a reverse auctioneer.

In 18:30-32, Abraham said, **“Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?”** And He said, **‘I will not do it if I find thirty there.’** And he said, **‘Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?’** And He said, **‘I will not destroy it on account of the twenty.’** Then he said, **‘Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?’** And He said, **‘I will not destroy it on account of the ten.’”**

Abraham’s boldness grew and for his last petitions he lowered the number of necessary righteous by tens! The Bible tells us that God is a “consuming fire” (Heb 10:31; 12:29) and yet it also tells us to come to Him boldly (Heb 4:14-16).<sup>28</sup> The Bible also exhorts us to persist in prayer (Luke 18:1-8). A man becomes physically strong by working continuously. A weight lifter trains constantly. Someone has said prayer is the gymnasium of our soul. Only through persistent prayer is our faith exercised and strengthened.<sup>29</sup>

One of the questions from this text is: Why did Abraham stop at the number ten? Why did he not press for five? The answer was that he probably felt there were at least ten righteous people in Sodom. It may be that he figured that there were ten righteous people in Lot’s family (Lot, his wife, at least two sons (19:12), at least two married daughters and their husbands (19:14), and two unmarried daughters (19:8)—exactly ten). Even if the daughters of 19:14 had not yet married their fiancés, and were the same as the daughters of 19:8, it was plausible to assume that Lot could find two other righteous people somewhere in the city of Sodom.<sup>30</sup> Yet, Abraham misjudged God’s grace. He bargained all the way down to ten, but God exceeds his requests and delivers the four who “qualify” anyway (19:12-22). God’s grace always exceeds our expectations (Eph 3:20).

Our passage closes with the following words: **“As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the LORD departed, and Abraham returned to his place”** (18:33). It does not say, “And the Lord went His way when Abraham had finished speaking to Him.” It says, **“As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the LORD departed.”** In other words Abraham did not quit here, God did. Intercession doesn’t change God’s plans; it changes us. God changed Abraham’s understanding of divine justice and mercy. Abraham did not change the mind of God; he demonstrated it. God did not suddenly alter His purposes; He informed Abraham of His purposes so that He could evidence His mercy and justice and compassion.

But that raises an interesting question: Why did God allow Abraham to intercede for Sodom? After all, God already knew the facts and He already knew what He was going to do. Doesn’t that render Abraham’s request useless? To say it that way is to come up against the greatest mystery of prayer. If God already knows what He is going to do, why pray? Some of the answers to that question may be seen in our text. First, God allowed Abraham to intercede in order to reveal His mercy. Second, He did it so that we would know that He (God) takes no pleasure in destroying the wicked. Third, Abraham’s prayer shows us the power righteous people can have. Fourth, in a larger sense, it teaches us the value of intercession. This is the purpose of prayer.

In 1886, Dr. John Pemberton introduced Atlanta, Georgia to his caramel-colored syrup concoction. He first distributed this drink to Jacobs Pharmacy where Coca-Cola was sold for the first time. As its popularity rose, Dr. Pemberton’s concern was that every person alive should be able to taste his product at least one time in his or her life!

It has been over 100 years since Dr. Pemberton’s concern took action. Surveys now show that 97% of the world has heard of Coca-Cola, 72% has seen a can of Coca-Cola, and 51% has tasted Coca-Cola! What we need are more people like Dr. Pemberton that will let their concern move them to action! An understanding of God’s justice and grace is far more valuable than Coca-Cola. Can we equal Dr. Pemberton’s burden and fervor and share it with others?<sup>31</sup> Right Christian living comes out of right Christian thinking.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted and revised from John H. Walton, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 488.

<sup>2</sup> See A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1962), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Sailhamer remarks, “The future fulfillment of these promises is stated as a divine certainty (18:18). Although the future fulfillment is a surety, the fulfillment is contingent on the descendants of Abraham ‘keeping the way of the Lord’ (18:19)...Here the intention is directed internally (‘to keep the way of the Lord’) with the end in view that Abraham and his descendants do ‘what is right and just.’ Only then will the Lord fulfill what he had promised Abraham...The notion of an internalized obedience found in this verse is remarkably close to the terms of the ‘new covenant’ found in the prophetic literature [Jer 31:33].” John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*: EBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), Electronic ed.

<sup>4</sup> Abraham was also a “prophet” (Gen 20:7), and God does nothing without disclosing His plans to His servants the prophets (Amos 3:7). Ronald F. Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 175.

<sup>5</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning & Blessing* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 262.

<sup>6</sup> Waltke writes, “The phrase is a technical metaphor for right behavior that leads to a right destiny due to one’s relationship with the Lord.” Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 269.

<sup>7</sup> Ian M. Duguid, *Living in the Gap Between Promise and Reality* (Phillipsburg, PA: P & R, 1999), 89.

<sup>8</sup> My favorite parenting book is Edward. N. Gross, *Will My Children Go to Heaven?: Hope and Help for Believing Parents* (Phillipsburg, PA: P & R, 1995). Another very helpful book is Bruce H. Wilkinson, *First-Hand Faith: Secrets of Raising Godly Children* (Gresham, Oregon Vision House, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Sailhamer notes, “Verse 19 seems to be an expansion on the ideas of 17:1 (‘walk before me and be blameless’). Nowhere else in the book, however, do we have such a reflective perspective on the events of the whole of the Abrahamic narratives. First, the Lord puts into words that which has been a central part of the narrative but has not yet been expressly verbalized, namely, Abraham’s election: ‘I have chosen him’ (*yeda tiw*). Second, the Lord went on to express his purpose (*lema`an*) in choosing Abraham; and, as it turns out, this purpose goes beyond that revealed in the preceding narratives. Here the attention is directed internally (‘to keep the way of the LORD’) with the end in view that Abraham and his descendants do ‘what is right and just.’ Only then (*lema`an*) will the Lord fulfill what he had promised to Abraham (‘so that [*lema`an*] the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised’). The notion of an internalized obedience found in this verse is remarkably close to the terms of the ‘new covenant’ found in the prophetic literature (‘I will put my law in their minds and write it in their hearts,’ Jer 31:33) and is deeply rooted in the theology of Deuteronomy (‘The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and all your soul, and [*lema`an*] live,’ 30:6).” Sailhamer, *Genesis*, Electronic ed.

<sup>10</sup> Will God spare a city or nation today because of the Christians in it? This passage is helpful in answering this question because in it we can see that a godly minority does play a role in influencing God’s judgment. It can delay judgment by promoting godliness. However a godly minority may not prevent God’s judgment if “sin is exceedingly grave” (18:20). God does not always choose to remove the righteous from the wicked before He judges the wicked as He did in Lot’s case. Nevertheless, the Judge of all the earth does deal justly. We can see this when we take the long view. People alive now have yet to receive their final judgment from the divine Judge.

<sup>11</sup> The term “outcry” (*zeaqaḥ*) may have two meanings. It may mean the outcry against Sodom, that is, the cry caused by its injustice and violence, or the cry of its rebellion against God (cf. 19:13).

<sup>12</sup> God keeps the record of sins and injustice. While others can ignore sin, God never ignores it. Sin cries out to Him (see 4:10; Jas 5:4). It must be resolved.

<sup>13</sup> While Ezekiel states that the guilt of Sodom was a refusal to help the poor and needy (16:49), this was not Sodom’s only sin. In the very next verse, Ezekiel indicates that they committed “abominations” (*toebah*). This word is used to describe sexual sin in the same chapter (16:22, 58) and elsewhere it specifically describes homosexuality (Lev 18:22; 20:13).

<sup>14</sup> Paul Borthwick, “The Sin of Sodom,” Adapted from the March/April 2005 edition of *Rev. Magazine*.

<sup>15</sup> Deffinbaugh comments, “First of all, only the two angels actually entered Sodom, not our Lord (cf. 19:1ff). Also, there was no need for God to inspect Sodom in order to learn the facts. God’s omniscience has no limits created by distance. The solution to this problem is found (to my satisfaction) in the other uses of the expression ‘to go down.’ In Genesis 11:5, 7 it is used of God’s involvement with Babel and the confusion of languages. In Exodus 3:8 it spoke of God’s intervention in Egypt to deliver His people. In all these instances ‘to go down’ conveys the idea of ‘becoming personally involved’ or of ‘personal intervention.’ This God did, without physically entering Sodom, Babel, or Egypt.” Robert Deffinbaugh, *Genesis: From Paradise to Patriarchs*. Lesson 19: Marks of Maturity: Genesis 18:1-33 ([www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1997).

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<sup>16</sup> Waltke, *Genesis*, 269.

<sup>17</sup> Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning & Blessing*, 264.

<sup>18</sup> Ed Dobson, *Abraham: The Lord Will Provide* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1993), 114-115.

<sup>19</sup> There is a textual variant in this verse. It is suggested that “The subjects were reversed by scribes who thought it indecorous for God to stand before a human being. ‘Remained’ refers more appropriately to God, who remains behind while the two men depart. God seeks to communicate with Abraham, not the other way around.” Terence E. Fretheim, “Genesis,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 1:468. See also Waltke, *Genesis*, 270.

<sup>20</sup> Hughes writes, “Abraham was wrong in supposing that the righteous cannot suffer the same tragedies as sinners. He was wrongheaded (not wronghearted) in his bold admonishment.” Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning & Blessing*, 265.

<sup>21</sup> Incidentally, the word rendered “came near” is used of the approach for battle, for appeasement, and for prayer (cf. 1 Kgs 18:36: Elijah on Mt. Carmel).

<sup>22</sup> This is the first time in Scripture that a man initiated a conversation with God.

<sup>23</sup> Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning & Blessing*, 265.

<sup>24</sup> It is noteworthy to mention that Lot is never mentioned in Abraham’s prayer. Perhaps Abraham prayed for Sodom because of his genuine love for the people whom he had rescued.

<sup>25</sup> The famous account of Abraham’s prayer for the righteous of Sodom reveals that his relationship with God had taken on a new dimension—concern for someone other than himself. The previous dialogues between Abraham and God (Gen 12, 15, 17) had all concerned the covenant promises and Abraham’s need for assurance that the promises were true and irrevocable. Bill T. Arnold, *Encountering the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 102.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Eaton, *Preaching Through the Bible: Genesis 12-23* (Kent, England: Sovereign World, 1999), 94.

<sup>27</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Genesis* (<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>, 2005), 153.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Eaton, *Preaching Through the Bible: Genesis 12-23* (Kent, England: Sovereign World, 1999), 93.

<sup>29</sup> Goettsche comments, “We don’t always see the answer to our prayers. Nowhere do we see that Abraham learned of Lot’s safety. Nowhere do we read of Abraham and Lot ever seeing each other again. As far as Abraham may have been concerned, Lot may have perished with Sodom. When Abraham looked out on the destroyed city, he may have felt a great depression sweep over him. He may have mourned that he didn’t ask specifically for the protection of Lot. As far as Abraham was concerned, he may have felt his intercession was fruitless.” Rev. Bruce Goettsche, “Keys to Intercessory Prayer” (Genesis 18:16-33):

<http://www.unionchurch.com/archive/051699.html> (7/17/05).

<sup>30</sup> Barry C. Davis, *Genesis* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Biblical Seminary unpublished class Notes, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Marshall, “A Heart for Souls: Genesis 18:16-33”:

<http://sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=43956&ContributorID=12588> (7/23/05).