



Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey

The OLD TESTAMENT- Their Story is Our Story

Abraham

Genesis Chapters 18 and 19, Week 5

In these chapters Abraham and his wife, Sarah, receive visitors. Abraham recognizes the visitors are God's messenger and two angels. He offers to feed them and have them stay and rest a while before continuing on their journey to Sodom and Gomorrah. When they leave, Abraham walks with them and the Lord debates about telling Abraham what they are going there to do. It is finally revealed to Abraham that the Lord is going to see for Himself the great sinfulness of Sodom and Gomorrah and to destroy the cities. Abraham appeals to God asking if He would still destroy them if 50 innocent people are found among the wicked. God says He will spare them for the sake of the 50. Abraham continues to pray to the Lord and ask if 45, 40, etc., down to 10 innocent men are found, will He spare the cities? Abraham's nephew, Lot, and his family live in Sodom and Abraham loves them. God promises to not destroy the cities for the sake of 10 innocent men.

When they reach Sodom, Lot meets the visitors and also offers them hospitality. Lot also recognizes them for who they are and takes them into his home. While there, the evil residents of Sodom come to Lot's house and want him to turn the three strangers out so they can injure and possibly kill them. Lot refuses and even offers to send his daughters in their place. As the evil people prepare to attack Lot's home, a blinding light appears. This prevents them from reaching Lot's door. It is revealed to Lot that Sodom and Gomorrah will be destroyed and Lot is to take his family and escape and "not look back". Lot and his family do escape and Lot's wife does look back and is turned into a pillar of salt. Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed by fire.

When Abraham is pleading with God not to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of the innocent, what is he actually asking God to do? Abraham seems to be pleading to God to preserve the cities, to forgive the people there, and to find another way to rid them of the evil they practice. What God actually does is save Lot and his family by helping them escape into the wilderness and then God does destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham knows that God is very merciful and can do anything, yet God chooses this solution. How many times do we pray to God for a specific outcome and, when we don't get it, we don't think God answered our prayers or even heard them? God hears our prayers and sees our difficulties and promises to be with us through our trials, but answers those prayers in His own time and in His own way. God heard Abraham's prayer. God loved Abraham and, for his sake, saved Abraham's nephew and his daughters from destruction. Keeping our minds and hearts open to God's solutions and trusting God will answer our prayers is part of being God's disciple.

Has there been a time in your life when God has answered a prayer but not in the way you expected? Is there a problem in your life that you would like God to solve? Will you be open to His solution?