

“Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes” (GENESIS 18:27, NIV).

Bible Study 4

Abraham: The Intercessor

BY ALAN HUESING

Read Genesis 18:16-33 and 19:1-29.

What did the Lord intend to do to the “cities of the plain”? _____

Why? _____

Why was Abraham concerned about God’s plans? _____

What approach did Abraham use to “negotiate” with God? (Genesis 18:25) _____

Was Abraham successful as an intercessor? Yes No

These chapters tell the story of the wickedness and destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The names of these two ancient cities are still synonyms for the cesspool, stinkpot and garbage can of the worst of human behavior. Only about 400 years after God sent the Flood to destroy the inhabitants of the world because of their wickedness, He had to return to judge and punish this small pocket of civilization. He did not blast them off the face of the earth just to show that He’s the Boss or even to show us all that He really means business about purity. As the Great Creator and Omni-Scientist, He knew all about deadly diseases and other consequences that are bred by the perverted misuse of human sexuality. Recently the world has experienced the wildfire spread of an incurable virus unleashed by homosexuality and transmitted by promiscuity until both the innocent and the guilty of large populations are being destroyed.

In this ancient Genesis story, God, the Judge and Protector of His creation, was on His way to disinfect the neighborhood. When He stopped to visit Abraham and Sarah, He decided to tell Abraham what He was about to do to his neighbors down on the plains below (Genesis 18:17).

Why did God tell Abraham His plans?

Abraham immediately knew that his neighbors were in big trouble. He could have just sat down in his front yard on his mountain and waited for the fireworks. After all, they were wicked and deserved to get fried, and God had already passed judgment on them. “But Abraham remained standing before the Lord” (Genesis 18:22). He was thinking. Was he concerned about his nephew, Lot, who had foolishly moved to the cities of the plain and allowed his family to be influenced by their wicked neighbors? Or was Abraham concerned about

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all the men and women, boys and girls who lived and worked and played in the cities only a mile or so from his own tent home?

Abraham carefully but quickly stepped forward as an intercessor for his neighbors. An intercessor is one who steps between to mediate and plead someone's case. An intercessor throws himself in the path of judgment on someone else's behalf even though it may put himself at risk.

Consider several intercessors throughout the Bible:

Who was the intercessor for the Israelites at Sinai? (Exodus 32:7-14) _____

Who interceded for Nabal when he foolishly offended David? (1 Samuel 25) _____

Who intercedes for us even now? (Hebrews 7:23-25) _____

Notice how Abraham talked to God as he interceded for his neighbors. How did he appeal to the nature of God? (Genesis 18:25)

How persistent was Abraham? How many times did he negotiate with God? _____

Was his intercession effective? (At least his nephew and family were saved.) _____

Abraham is our example. He used his friendship with God to plead for his neighbors and relatives. He did not waste time or influence condemning them or complaining about them. He begged God to save them. *On mission* Christians intercede for the lost.

Name five lost people you know who are facing the judgment of God. _____

Will you intercede for them?