

The Righteous and Merciful Judge

Genesis 18.16-33

God has demonstrated that He can do *anything* He chooses to do – Sarah will give birth at the age of 90! But then the scene changes: God is going to judge Sodom. Can He do it? Yes. But will He be just? God wants us to know His mind – and reveals it here.

Soliloquy and Declaration: A View into the Mind of God (16-21)

Rhetorical question: "Should I tell Abraham what I'm about to do?"

Fact-finding trip: "I'm going to check out Sodom and Gomorrah."

Negotiation: A Lesson in God's Mercy on the Righteous (22-33)

Question: "Will you judge the righteous with the wicked?"

Answer: God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked.

*"Far be it from you to slay the righteous with the wicked,
treating the righteous and wicked alike. Far be it from you!
Will not the judge of all the earth do what is right?"*

Genesis 18:25



Digging Deeper

1. Genesis 18.16 provides an ominous introduction: The Lord and the two angels with Him "looked down toward Sodom." There is here a subtle but unmistakable reminder about God: He is not unaware of the evil that takes place on the earth! How do these Scriptures affect your feelings about God's attentiveness to our lives? 2 Chronicles 16.9; Psalms 33.18; 34.15; 139.1-12; Prov. 5.21; 15.3; Amos 9.8; 1 Cor. 4.5; Heb. 4.12-13; 1 Peter 3.12.
2. Gen. 18.17-19 provide a 'window' into God's mind – one that He *wants* us to see! Judgment is coming on Sodom, and God is 'talking with Himself' about whether He should hide this from Abraham or not. What are the two reasons (verses 18-19) which prompt God to tell Abraham? What does God intend Abraham to do with this knowledge? What can we learn from the records of events like Sodom? See 1 Cor. 10.6-11.
3. What 'character attribute' of the Lord is on display in Genesis 18.20-21? How have we seen this already in Genesis (in cases like the sin in the Garden, Cain killing Abel, the flood, and the tower of Babel)?
4. Abraham and the Lord have an extended 'discussion' in verses 23-33. What is Abraham's 'core issue' (v23)? His hypothetical case involves fifty righteous people in Sodom, and Abraham is incredulous that God would not spare them from judgment. The resulting 'negotiation' sees Abraham progressively reduce the number of righteous people who would cause God to spare the city of Sodom to ten. What 'character attribute' of God is on display here?
5. America is a wicked country today. The prevalence of violence, greed, false piety, pride, arrogance, hypocrisy, sexual deviancy, attack on the unborn and on marriage, etc. are a "great outcry" like God heard from Sodom and Gomorrah. Considering God's willingness to spare Sodom for the sake of ten righteous people, how important is our personal commitment to the Lord today?