

CHRIST: Is Anything Too Hard for The LORD? [Luke 1.37]

Read Genesis 18.1 – 19.38 & Luke 1.26-38

‘CHRIST IN GENESIS’: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS & SETTING THE CONTEXT

1/ Once again, this lesson will build on the previous two lessons as we continue to follow the ‘Abraham narrative’ portion of Genesis.

- In [Lesson 8 \[CHRIST: God’s Blessing to the Nations\]](#), we learned how Yahweh elected and called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldeans to be the recipient of His Messianic covenant promises. Among these promises was: **“And I will make of you a great nations, and I will bless you and make your name great, ...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” [ch 12.1-3]**. These promises, of course, would be fulfilled in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who would come from Abraham **‘in the fullness of time’**; and more immediately, would require the aged, barren couple to give birth to a child.
- In [Lesson 9 \[CHRIST: To Whom the Promises Were Made\]](#), Yahweh renews, affirms, and confirms that covenant promise by rejecting Ishmael, their self-made *‘son of the flesh’* via Hagar and repeating His promise that the promised heir and carrier of His covenant would come, not only from Abraham’s own loins, but also from Sarah’s own womb. That **‘son of promise’** would be called Isaac.

/ That brings us to the end of **chapter 17**, where this lesson passage picks up and continues...

I / Genesis 18.1-15 | The Divine covenant-child ‘reveal’

1/ So, in keeping with our course theme of CHRIST IN GENESIS, we will have time only to follow the theme and thread of how the CHRIST-promise and CHRIST-markers are revealed and developed in this lesson passage. And it will follow with this imminent birth announcement of their covenant son, Isaac.

2/ There is really no break in the narrative between [what we know as] the end of **ch 17** and the **first verse of ch 18**. Yahweh had already announced in **ch 17.21**: **“But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.”** So they had already received Yahweh’s Divine birth announcement.

3/ The significance of what took place here in **ch 18.1-15** is that Yahweh makes a Personal appearance to Abraham and Sarah to confirm this imminent birth announcement via His Personal visitation. Abraham was ‘minding his own business’ – resting and taking a break from the hottest part of the day – on this day when three men suddenly appeared and approached him. He looked up and saw them, ran from his tent door to meet them, and **‘bowed himself to the earth’** to welcome them. It is unclear whether he recognized anything other than they looked like dignified **‘strangers’** who had come to visit him; and he addressed the one who appeared to be their leader with a hospitable and deferential greeting: **“O Lord [‘Sir / Master’], if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.”** In other words, Abraham extended to them the customary greeting, courtesy, and hospitality of a grateful host [**vv 3-8**].

4/ There is also a covenant context in this sharing of the meal. Sharing a meal together was a customary practice among the peoples of that day when a covenant was made and confirmed. The sharing of the meal showed, not only a commonality of interest and transaction between them, but it also signified the tightness of their relationship of peace. This is illustrated all throughout the Old and New Testaments, culminating in the Last Passover meal and the institution of the Lord’s Supper with all its covenant significances.

5/ However, as they conversed, it would become evident to Abraham that these **‘stranger’** visitors were ‘from another world.’ They were Divine **‘strangers,’** especially the One who led the conversation. [This is why we are commanded by the Hebrews writer: **“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13.2 & also 3 John, vv 5-6)**]. **“They said to him, ‘Where is Sarah your wife?’”** The One who is then identified as **‘The LORD’** [for the first time in **v 13** - previous references are the pronoun ‘he’] surely asked this question, revealing that He knew Sarah’s name. He also knew where she was ... He was asking Abraham rhetorically to let him know he was talking with the same One who had given the Isaac birth promise before [**ch 17.15-21**].

6/ The LORD repeats the promise of the immediate and impending birth of their covenant son: **“The LORD said to Abraham, ‘I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.’”** This is when Sarah laughed to herself [as Abraham himself had in **ch 17.17**]. She was well aware of both of their ages, their **‘worn-out’** bodies, and also the history of her own barrenness. Like the virgin Mary asked, when Gabriel announced the birth of the covenant-Fulfiller, CHRIST: **“How will this be, since I am a virgin?”** [Luke 1.34]. These two related birth announcements and stories parallel in so many ways.

7/ Though Sarah laughed to herself, privately and in secret, The LORD heard her and knew. He knows all things. And He further reveals His Divine identity with this knowledge. So The LORD calls her on it. She lied and denied she had laughed. The LORD rebuked her for laughing with incredulity and then confirms that she will indeed have this baby – but only because it will be a ‘God thing’: **“Is anything too hard for The LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.”** This same language of Divine *‘only by an act of God’* conception was used again by the angel Gabriel to Mary concerning her own virgin-born son, Jesus CHRIST, and also the birth of John the Baptist to her aged, barren relative Elizabeth: **“For nothing will be impossible with God”** [Luke 1.37].

8/ BTW, as yet another CHRIST-marker, this same word for **‘too hard [or ‘wonderful’] for The LORD’** is used as one of CHRIST’s Messianic names **‘Wonderful’** in **Isaiah 9.6**.

9/ However, we do need to give Sarah the same testimonies of faith that the Scriptures give her in **Romans 4.16-22 & Hebrews 11.11-12**. Her faith grew out of her initial unbelief through trusting Yahweh’s word.

II / Genesis 18.16-33 | Yahweh shares His plan with His covenant ‘friend’

1/ After the meal, The LORD reveals yet another evidence and expression of his covenant relationship with Abraham: He chooses to share with Abraham and ‘let him in’ on the other errand He was fulfilling as Yahweh-God – He had come also to pour out His wrath and judgment on the wickedness, abominations, and perversions of His Holiness and righteousness that were being practiced in Sodom and Gomorrah.

2/ **Psalm 25.14: “The friendship [‘secret’ KJV] of The LORD is for those who fear Him, and He makes known to them His covenant.”** And **John 15.14-15: You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.** And Abraham is **‘the friend of God’** [1 Chronicles 20.7; Isaiah 41.8; James 2.23]. So Yahweh says to the two angels [**ch 19.1**] in Abraham’s presence: **“Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, 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 to Abraham what He has promised him”** [vv 17-19]. In other words, **“Since Abraham is my covenant friend, and I have chosen him to carry My Seed and My Name throughout the coming generations until CHRIST comes into the world, He needs to know My righteous character – both to save those who believe in Me and to destroy those who reject Me and My salvation.”**

3/ It is then that the The LORD reveals to Abraham His righteousness and justice that requires Him to judge the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah with a fair, full, and just knowledge of their deserts of His wrathful and judgments. This is a parallel to Yahweh’s just evaluations of the wickedness and corruption that brought the Flood upon the world in Noah’s day [**ch 6.5-13**] and upon the nations at the Tower of Babel [**ch 11.5-7**]. AND, the same righteous judgments upon the whole world in the Last Day.

4/ **vv 22-33** / This exchange between Abraham and Yahweh is so revealing of the covenant relationship between them. [1] Even though Abraham repeatedly confesses his unworthiness to question Yahweh [**vv 27, 30-32**], he also knows Yahweh is willing to speak to him as a friend. [2] In these six requests or ‘negotiations’ Abraham has with Yahweh, he is pleading and interceding for Lot whom Abraham knows is in Sodom with his family. *THIS is the crux and core of Abraham’s intercessions.* After all, Lot is a believer – though a seriously compromised one [see **2 Peter 2.7-9: ‘righteous Lot,’ ‘that righteous man,’**

‘the godly.’] [3] Abraham is well aware of the wickedness of Sodom [**ch 13.13**]; but he also knows that Yahweh has promised to **‘bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you’** [**ch 12.3**], meaning that Yahweh has promised to save from His wrath all those who put their trust in Him ... as well as destroy all those who do not. So, Abraham has no question that Sodom deserves to be destroyed, and Yahweh must do that to be fair, just, and righteous Himself – *but is He also not covenant-bound to deliver the righteous from that same wrathful destruction?* **“Then Abraham drew near and said, ‘Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?’”** Yahweh replies: **“If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”**

5/ This same covenant promise Yahweh made to save ALL the righteous from **‘the wrath to come’** [**Romans 5.9; 1 Thessalonians 1.10**] was then re-negotiated down to 45, 40, 30, 20, and finally 10. **“[Yahweh] answered, ‘For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.’”**

III / Genesis 19.1-29 | Sodom and Gomorrah: a ‘pre-enactment’ of God’s judgment on the world

1/ Before we get into this next section that describes the actual Divine destruction of the wrath of God against the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, we would do well to see Yahweh’s purpose in saving Lot from that destruction from the perspective of the New Testament commentary. We’ll find it in **2 Peter 2.4-9**. In that commentary, the distinction is sharply drawn between God’s Holy, righteous, and just judgments against all sin and wickedness – and His covenant promise and commitment to save out of that same destruction all those who believe in Him through the Gospel of CHRIST. The distinction is drawn by the use of the contrasting words and phrases **‘spared not’** and **‘but preserved Noah,’ ‘if He rescued righteous Lot,’** and **‘then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials’** – both now in this world, and especially from **‘the wrath to come’** at the Last Day and the end of this age. [This will be the final ushering in of the New Creation to which everything is going, **2 Peter 3.8-13.**]

2/ So, this whole narrative of the fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a ‘pre-enactment’ of the coming conflagration by which the whole creation will be once again and finally purged from the curse of sin and the corruption of wickedness to reveal the perfect New Creation Kingdom of CHRIST.

3/ We should also include **Jude, v 7** here as a New Testament and eschatological commentary of Yahweh’s purpose for Sodom and Gomorrah to serve as a ‘pre-enactment’ of His ‘wrath to come’: **“...just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example [of ‘the judgment of the great day’] by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”**

4/ So while The LORD remains behind with Abraham, He dispatches **‘the two angels’** to carry out His dual mission: [1] destroy the wicked Sodom, Gomorrah, and surrounding cities, and [2] rescue Lot by delivering him and bringing him out. **The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.** This means that Lot had risen to a place of prominence and leadership. **The gate of the city** was not a place for merely lounging, playing checkers, and ‘shooting the breeze’ among the guys. It was the place where the ‘councilmen’ met to conduct the city’s business and legal transactions. This was the environment, culture, and associations Lot had chosen when he separated from Abraham [**ch 14.8-13**].

5/ Again, **2 Peter 2.7-8** reveals the inner personal tensions of character and conflicts of faith and values that Lot was willing to entertain to enjoy what he thought would be the advantages of compromising his faith with the ‘love of this present world.’ We are told there that Lot was **“greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard)...”** Yet, sadly, Lot thought he could live in, enjoy, and benefit from both worlds. As we shall see, he ended up losing everything except his own soul. He was saved, **‘but only as through fire’** [**1 Corinthians 3.15**].

6/ Lot extended to these two angels the same kind of hospitality that Abraham had shown them immediately previous to this. He offered to take them home with him, feed them, and give them lodging. They offered to spend the night in the town square. Lot knew that would not be safe [the angels knew also], so **‘he pressed them strongly [insisted]; so they turned aside to him and entered his house.’**

7/ The wicked homosexual men of the city were watching also, and they were burning in their lusts and perverted passions to have these ‘stranger’ visitors for themselves. So, no sooner had Lot fed them, and before they could retire for the night, **“the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.’”** Lot did the unthinkable: he wanted to protect his ‘stranger’ guests, so he offered to bring out his two virgin daughters, hand them over to the men, and allow them to satisfy their sexual lusts with them. But the men of Sodom violently refused his offer and attempted to break down his door to get in to seize the men guests. The angels delivered Lot first by overpowering the men of Sodom, reaching out to Lot, pulling him back into the house, and then ‘blind-siding’ all the Sodomite men – striking them with blindness so that they could not see to complete their perverted desires and intentions.

8/ The angels urgently called Lot to gather his family together - they would lead them out of the city to safety. There were only six of them: Lot, his wife, his two virgin daughters, and the two fiancés who were to marry them. Sadly again, Lot had so compromised any witness to righteousness he might have desired to establish, that when he warned his future sons-in-law of the coming judgments of God on their city – which he himself had loved and associated with – **“...he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.”** This is the same verb for ‘laugh’ as was used repeatedly for both Abraham and Sarah in **chs 17 & 18**. *“You’re kidding, aren’t you? You can’t be serious! You’ve got to be joking!”* Obviously, Lot had never witnessed to Yahweh’s righteousness before, and the need to repent of their sins and put their faith and trust in Yahweh for salvation. And, as we shall see, Lot’s wife enjoyed being in ‘The Real Housewives of Sodom.’

8/ **“As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, ‘Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.’ But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, The LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. And as they brought him out, one said, ‘Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away.’”** Two things here: [1] Lot was lingering, reluctant to leave it all behind; and [2] in their flight out of Sodom, **“Lot’s wife...looked back”** in longing for the ‘good life’ they had enjoyed there. God turned her into a pillar of salt [the same destructive element God sowed into the barren land] as a testimony to **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” [1 John 2.15-17]**. Jesus would reprise this narrative in **Luke 17.28-37** to warn us all to **“set our affections on things above, where CHRIST is” [Colossians 3.1-4]** in view of His Second Coming to both destroy this present world and save those who believe in Him! **“So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived”** – as He had promised Abraham in the covenant ... and as He will do in the Last Day!

IV / Genesis 19.30-38 | The incestuous birth of the Moabites and Ammonites

1/ Lot had pleaded for this ‘little’ city of **Zoar** as a ‘city of refuge’ [vv 20-22]. Lot was a city-dweller; he didn’t think he would survive ‘off the grid.’ But he soon became fearful of living there in Zoar even. So he fled again with his two daughters into the nearby hills and became a cave-dweller.

2/ His two daughters [who are nameless], fearful that their little family would become extinct, and still carrying with them the same compromised morals they had witnessed in Sodom, conspired among themselves that each in turn would impregnate themselves by their father, Lot. They did. The purpose of this sordid narrative is to explain the origins of two of covenant Israel’s perennial enemies – Moabites and Ammonites – who would carry on the warfare of *‘the seed of the serpent’* against the *‘seed of the woman.’*

“Flee from the wrath to come! Lay hold onto eternal life!”