

Making Promises

Part 1: The Patriarchs

Review

- God promises to make Abram the father of a great nation, but Abram remains childless. Abram's belief in the promises of God are immediately put to the test. The land he's promised undergoes a famine, then he lies to Pharaoh to save his own life, then he has arranged for his heir to be an adopted slave-son – Eliezer of Damascus.
- We continually seeing God fulfill his end of the promises, by preserving Abram's life, and blessing those that are with him.
- Abram considers God's promise trustworthy, and God considered him righteous on the basis of his faith.
- The Lord offers to Abram a sign of his obligation to the covenant that he is offering to Abram by splitting the animals in half, and passing between the animals.
- Abram and Sarai try to fulfill the Lord's promise through Sarai's servant Hagar. The child that results from Abram and Hagar is Ishmael, and he receives a blessing because he is Abram's child. Yet, the Lord reiterates that Ishmael is not the heir of promise, but a child from Abraham and Sarah. Circumcision is given as a sign of the covenant.

Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and the LORD

- Abraham is visited by three strangers, identified as men in chapter 18, and he begins to **entertain them lavishly** as is the custom.
 - It becomes apparent that the intention of their visit is to, once again, promise Abraham, this time guaranteeing a **specific time of fulfillment**.
 - Sarah overhears the promise made to Abraham and laughs, giving full meaning to the name of the child, "Isaac," which means, **"laughter"** (**Gen. 18:12, 15**).
 - The promise of a child in 18:1, should tell the reader that Abraham is **fulfilling** what the YHWH is requiring of him (**Gen. 17:1**). Abraham has shown his noble character through his **generous hospitality**.
 - Compare the hurried nature of Abraham's hospitality (**Gen. 18:2, 6-7**) with the inhospitable hosts of Sodom and the **sluggishness** of Lot's household (**Gen. 19:2-3, 5, 14-16**).

- The identity of the speaker from God in this scene has always caused a trouble for many interpreters throughout history, but the text seems to make the point that it is **YHWH** that appeared to Abraham (**Gen. 18:1, 13, 14, 17, 20, 22, 26, 33**).
 - It is also clear that the other two “men” with YHWH are **angels** (**Gen. 18:22; 19:1**).
 - The times in the Old Testament when this figure appears, he is usually referred to as the **Angel of YHWH** (**Gen. 16:7–13; 18:1–2, 17–22; 22:11, 15–16; Num. 22:23; Judg. 5:23; 6:11; 13:3**).
 - This figure appears to be different than an ordinary angel. He is referred to by **the Lord’s name** (most notably in chapter 18), and he is treated **differently than other angels** (consider the difference between **Judges 13:15-25** and **Revelation 19:10**).
 - The best assessment of this character as he appears in scripture is that he is **the pre-incarnate Christ, the second person of the trinity, God the Son**.

Abraham Pleads for Sodom and Gomorrah

- The Lord tells Abraham of his plan to destroy Sodom on the basis of his **covenantal promise** (**Gen. 12:3; 18:18**).
 - “Acting as the one chosen to promote life, Abraham proposes that the future of everyone be determined not by the wicked ones in the midst of the community, but **by the righteous ones**.” -Eugene Roop
 - God agrees to this way of thinking and **saves** the righteous in his judgment (Rahab in Joshua 2, Assyria in Jonah 3-4, **Ezekiel 14:12-20**).
 - The Lord proposes to go down and see so he will know. This is the narrator’s figurative way of saying that God always **thoroughly investigates** the crime before passing sentence (**Gen. 3:11–13; 4:9–12; 11:5**).
- Abraham first pleads for sparing the city on the basis of 50 righteous. This would be considered about **half of a small city** (**Amos 5:3**).
 - “It is now established that the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, the paradigm for God’s future judgments, is just. The Lord investigates the accusations thoroughly (18:22), **ensures two objective witnesses** (**Deut. 19:15**), involves the faithful in his judgment, displays active compassion for the suffering, and prioritizes divine mercy over indignant wrath (i.e., not to be destroyed if even ten are righteous).” -Bruce Waltke

Patriarchs: Part 5

Genesis 18:12	So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"
Genesis 18:15	But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."
Genesis 17:1	When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,
Genesis 18:2	He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth
Genesis 18:6-7	6 And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly.
Genesis 19:2-3	2 and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." 3 But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.
Genesis 19:5	And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."
Genesis 19:14-16	14 So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. 15 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." 16 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.
Genesis 18:1	And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.
Genesis 18:13	The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'
Genesis 18:14	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."
Genesis 18:17	The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,
Genesis 18:20	Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,
Genesis 18:22	So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord.
Genesis 18:26	And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."
Genesis 18:33	And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.
Genesis 19:1	The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth
Genesis 16:7-13	7 The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." 9 The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." 10 The angel of the Lord also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." 11 And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has listened to your affliction. 12 He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen." 13 So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."
Genesis 18:1-2	1 And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. 2 He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth
Genesis 18:17-22	17 The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 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." 20 Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know." 22 So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord.
Genesis 22:11	But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

Genesis 22:15–16	15 And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,
Numbers 22:23	And the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand. And the donkey turned aside out of the road and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey, to turn her into the road.
Judges 5:23	“Curse Meroz, says the angel of the Lord, curse its inhabitants thoroughly, because they did not come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.
Judges 6:11	Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.
Judges 13:3	And the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.
Judges 13:15–25	15 Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, “Please let us detain you and prepare a young goat for you.” 16 And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “If you detain me, I will not eat of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the Lord.” (For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of the Lord.) 17 And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, “What is your name, so that, when your words come true, we may honor you?” 18 And the angel of the Lord said to him, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?” 19 So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it on the rock to the Lord, to the one who works wonders, and Manoah and his wife were watching. 20 And when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the Lord went up in the flame of the altar. Now Manoah and his wife were watching, and they fell on their faces to the ground. 21 The angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of the Lord. 22 And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, for we have seen God.” 23 But his wife said to him, “If the Lord had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering at our hands, or shown us all these things, or now announced to us such things as these.” 24 And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew, and the Lord blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.
Revelation 19:10	Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.
Genesis 12:3	I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
Genesis 18:18	seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?
Genesis 3:11–13	11 He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”
Genesis 4:9–12	9 Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” 10 And the Lord said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”
Genesis 11:5	And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built.
Amos 5:3	For thus says the Lord God: “The city that went out a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which went out a hundred shall have ten left to the house of Israel.”
Deuteronomy 19:15	“A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.