

## EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

### Message #42

Genesis 17:22-18:15

When we examine the life of Abraham, we cannot help but be impressed with his obedience. It is true he had moments of failure and lapses of faith, but his overall character is one of a man who believes God and obeys God no matter what God asked him to do. It is that obedience that made Abraham so useful and earned him one of the most prestigious positions in the program of God and the Word of God.

**WHEN ONE HEARS AND OBEYS THE WORD OF GOD HE WILL HAVE INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND RECEIVE MANY BLESSINGS FROM GOD EVEN WHEN THERE HAVE BEEN MOMENTS OF FAILURE.**

**HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #1** - Abraham immediately obeys the Word of God.  
17:22-27

When God finished His discourse with Abraham, he immediately obeyed God, the very same day. This immediate obedience meant that all the people of his house would never be completely cut off from God. Dr. S. L. Johnson points out that the Holy Spirit regarded the chronology of this act to be very important - First, Abraham was circumcised; Second, Ishmael was circumcised; Third, all those born into his house were circumcised and Fourth, all those bought were circumcised (*Genesis Study* #32, p. 5).

This gives us a good glimpse as to how Abraham operated his own life and home - in full conformity to and immediate obedience to the word of God. It is no wonder he became such a powerful man of God.

**HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #2** - God has intimate fellowship With Abraham. 18:1-8

The conjunction “now” which begins verse 1 clearly connects us to the context and the preceding information which describes the obedience of Abraham. Drs. Johann Karl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch really pick up on this point when they write that after Abraham had obeyed God and participated in the rite of circumcision, he was “shortly afterwards honored by being allowed to receive and entertain the Lord and two angels in his tent” (Genesis, p. 228). Chapters 18 and 19 are in direct contrast to each other. Chapter 18 describes Abraham in close fellowship with the holy God and chapter 19 describes Lot in close fellowship with the wicked world.

It has been 13 years of spiritual drought since Abraham had heard from God so when God finally appeared to him and commanded him to do something, he immediately obeyed (17:9-14, 23-27).

Abraham was in his tent during the heat of the day (18:1) and it had been a while since he had been circumcised because he “ran” to meet the three men, something that would require some time of healing (18:2). It is very clear from the context that one of the three men is the LORD - YHWH (18:1, 3, 13), and the other two men are angels (18:22; 19:1).

When Abraham spotted the three men, he ran to meet them and bowed down in their presence and requested that if he had “found favor” that they would fellowship with him and enjoy meal (18:3-5). That word “favor” is a Hebrew word which means “grace.” What Abraham is

requesting is if he has arrived at or attained to (“found”) the favorable status of the grace of God that God fellowship with him at a meal. When verses 5 and 8 inform us that they ate with him, once again **Abraham knew that he was back in the favor of God.** When you have blown it and then you again see God do something special for you, it lets you know that you are once again back in His favor and it is an epoch spiritual moment.

Here is the first instance in the Bible where someone asks God to eat a meal with him, but this picture won’t be the last: 1) A symbol of God’s favorable work between Abimelech and Isaac (Genesis 26:26-20); 2) A symbol of God’s closeness to Israel (Exodus 24:1-11); 3) A symbol of an intimate relationship between Jesus Christ and His disciples (Matthew 26:20-29); 4) A symbol of a church who did not have a proper relationship with Jesus Christ (Revelation 3 :20); 5) A symbol of a believer in sin who does not have fellowship with God nor is obedient to God (I Corinthians 5:11); 6) A symbol of sharing in God’s prophetic program (Revelation 19:7-10).

Here is the point- Abraham it bad in chapter 16, but now he is back on track - obeying God. **The real question here is, will God maintain a proper relationship with him and have intimate fellowship with one who has blown it and is now back on track?** The answer is found at the end of verse 8 “. . .they ate!”

### **HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #3 - God promises to bless Abraham. 18:9-15**

Not only did God have intimate fellowship with Abraham, but He promises to bless him and He promises that a 100 year old man (this is how old he will be - Genesis 21 :5) and a 90 year old woman will produce a son.

Now Sarah had been listening to the promise (tents are not sound proof) and her response was she laughed “to herself.” She did not laugh out loud, but the fact that she and her husband were far beyond the age of bearing children, made her laugh (18:11 1-12). No one could see her, so she thought, because she was in the tent and out of sight (Genesis 18:9-10). No one could hear her, so she thought, because her laugh was internal and not external (Genesis 18: 12). **But Sarah was about to learn a very important lesson - God does see her, God does hear her and God does know exactly What she is thinking (Genesis 18:13).** Even though, out of fear, she will try to cover her tracks by lying, God still knew the truth (Genesis 18:15).

No one can fool God. God knows our hearts and the intents of our hearts. If our heart is clean and true it is heading toward blessing. God’s response to Sarah is that nothing is too hard for Him (Genesis 18:14).

There will be many believers who probably will stand before God and claim they could not get victory over their problems and God will say something like - “Is anything too difficult for the LORD?”