**Origins (pt.2) - wk 8 – Life and Death**

**The OT is the sign to the Messiah - NT is the arrival of - JESUS.**

**Genesis – The Life of Abraham - the beginning of the way.**

**The LORD called an unlikely wanderer – fast forward, Abe is now growing in his walk with the LORD and settled in Canaan.**

**25 yrs in five chapters. Last week – God affirms the promises.**

**New names and bigger promises – your sons will be kings.**

**The El Shaddai (God almighty) has not forgotten him!**

**LIFE**

**This chapter can only be understood within the attributes of God**

**(sometime later - within a few months) Genesis 18:1 The LORD (YHVH) appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. (6th appearance) 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. (somehow, he knew…)**

**Who are the three? Is it the Trinity – No.**

**Genesis 19:1 – tells us that two of them are angels.**

**This was a Christophany (explain) This was Jesus before the incarnation—the eternal 2nd person of the Trinity. 2 weeks ago.**

**John 1:18 - No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.**

**The invisible only God is made known in physical form thru Jesus alone. (1 Tim 6:16 / Col. 1:15-20) The LORD (YHVH) was Jesus.**

**\*\*\* The LORD reveals himself**

**In creation to all / and to his chosen through Jesus – and still today in his Word and Spirit.**

**He is not hidden or hiding from you! He is not a secret.**

**(Then it gets strange…) 3 He said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, my Lord, (Adonai) do not pass your servant by. 4 Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. 5 Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way - now that you have come to your servant.” “Very well,” they answered, “do as you say.”**

**\*\*\* The LORD is self-sufficient – Aseity**

**But God ate and found shade – how?**

**The Christophany & angels are showing communion with Abe.**

**6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. “Quick,” he said, “get three seahs (measures) of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread.” 7 Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. 8 He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared (this was easily over an hour) and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree. (He stands by as a servant)**

**We can learn a lot from Abraham in this passage: Abe the Servant**

* **Readily serve - because you never know if the LORD will show up in the needs of another, in a circumstance, in a trial, or in blessing.**

**Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.**

* **Quickly serve – he hurried; he did not drag his feet. His age did not stop him (young or old). I’m on it.**
* **Willingly serve - Nothing was too small – he was hands-on, not afraid to get his hands dirty.**

**Col 3:23 - Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men…**

* **Generously serve - Sacrificial in his serving (Ro 12:1). It is all the Lords’ anyway. Blessed to be a blessing.**
* **Quietly served – He quietly stood by – not looking for reward and attention – humbly served. Stood by and listened.**

**Matt 20:26 But whoever would be great among you must be a servant.**

**(A funny conversation) 9 “Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him. “There, in the tent,” he said. 10 Then one of them said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.” Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. 11 Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. (This will require a physical miracle – 99 & 90 – Rom. describe them as good as dead) 12 So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, “After I am worn out and my lord (Abe) is old, will I now have this pleasure?” (listening, she thought - yeah, right!)**

**13 Then the LORD said to Abraham, (this was directed to Abe) “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? (similar words to Mary – nothing is impossible) I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” 15 Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.” But he said, “Yes, you did laugh.” (Replay this scenario – I didn’t do that! – God says, “Yes, you did.”)**

**\*\*\* The LORD knows and hears all things – Omniscience**

**“Why did you laugh?” – rhetorical question**

**The LORD who knows all, nothing hidden- you can’t lie to God.**

**How might we live differently if we actually believed that God hears and knows everything?**

**\*\*\* The LORD is all-powerful – Omnipotence**

**Nothing is too hard for the LORD.**

**The LORD of impossibility – same words to Mary**

**Gen 18:14, Jer 32:17, 32:27, Job 42:2, Luke 1:37, Matthew 19:26**

**\*\*\* The LORD is exercising his perfect will – Sovereignty**

**“At the appointed time… you will have a son”**

**God has a plan, and it will be done.**

**How did God deal with her unbelief? He responded with:**

**Nothing is too hard for me and it’s already as good as done.**

**DEATH**

**(Then, a very strange conversation with the LORD) 16 When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. 17 Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? 18 Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. 19 For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”**

**God is contemplating telling Abe - yet knows already all things?**

**(Then God gave him the plan) 20 Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous (the cry of injustice – known for their immorality, cruelty, and oppression of the poor) 21 that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” (implying destruction is to come on them)**

**God knows everything – why would he need to see for himself?**

**Why did he tell Abe: 17 “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?**

* **God was honoring Abe’s calling and relationship (V18)**
* **God was giving insight into the Holiness of the LORD (v19)**

**Everyone will face accountability for their sin.**

* **God was assuring Abe that God was preserving his family (v19)**
* **God was revealing his character to Abe (v20)**

**He knew Abe would ask - God was explaining out loud his compassion. The LORD knows all things.**

**\*\*\* The LORD takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked**

**Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?’**

**An even stranger conversation with Abe and the LORD follows…**

**Fifty - 22 The men turned away and went toward Sodom, (the two angels) but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. (the LORD stayed)**

**23 Then Abraham approached him (thinking about the destruction and perhaps his nephew who lives there) and said: “Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will You really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? 25 Far be it from You to do such a thing - to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from You! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” 26 The Lord said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”**

**Forty-five - 27 Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the LORD, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, 28 what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?” “If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.”**

**Forty - 29 Once again, he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?” He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.” (Abe thinks he is haggling with God)**

**Thirty - 30 Then he said, “May the LORD not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”**

**Twenty - 31 Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?” He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.”**

**Ten - 32 Then he said, “May the LORD not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.” (Did Abe just talk God down – not exactly) 33 When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, He left, and Abraham returned home. (it's in God’s hands)**

**It seems God was willing to change his mind – Yet…**

**\*\*\* The LORD does not change his mind – he is immutable**

**Numbers 23:19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?**

**He can’t be manipulated or contradict his own words or promises. His love is faithful, and his way eternal.**

**God is revealing to Abe his mercy on wicked people through this conversation. If there are righteous people…**

**\*\*\* The LORD is a righteous judge – Omni-benevolence**

**God is revealing his righteous judgment and communicating his moral justice. He is not wiping out sinners without just cause; he is explaining his understanding of the situation.**

**Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.**

**Rev 16:7 “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.”**

**This conversation is God saying - I am the one who acts patiently and with mercy – and with righteous judgment.**

**We can learn a lot from Abraham in this passage: Abe the intercessor**

* + **Prayed soundly**

**Abe had developed some incredible theology of YHVH.**

**In this interaction, He understood the sovereignty of the LORD.**

**You are too good to unjustly judge the innocent.**

**What we know about God in this one chapter:**

**God is self-sufficient / God hears all things / God knows all things / God is all powerful / God is in control / God is perfect in mercy and justice / God is the righteous judge of all the earth!**

**Effective intercession / worship begins with an accurate view of God. We don’t pray to a rock, tree, or space Ghost.**

* + **Prayed compassionately**

**He had compassion for those who did not know the LORD.**

**He could have asked just for Lot’s family.**

**S&G were unkind to Abe and his family – But he cried out for mercy on terrible people – Abe knew God’s mercy and grace and was able to pray it for others. So should we.**

* + **Prayed persistently**

**He kept asking and calling out to God, which is the heart of a great leader. He kept asking and trusting in God’s goodness.**

**Don’t stop praying for your family & Friends!**

* + **Prayed humbly**

**He stopped at 10. In the end - Abe’s surrender was to God’s will.**

**It was becoming apparent that S&G was in trouble – they were not righteous - and God was being gracious.**

**This is not about travailing before the Lord to get your requests. The LORD had a plan and knew there were not even 10, which, by the way, included Lot’s family.**

**We are to pray like Abraham:**

**Pray soundly – compassionately – persistently – humbly**

**James 5:16** **The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.**

**Pray to the God of the impossible for your family, neighbors, community, and city!**

**God put us here at this time – for our community – to pray for them and to tell them about Jesus.**

**“Every saved person this side of heaven owes the gospel to every unsaved person this side of hell.” David Platt**

**We are living in S&G as a country.**

**And the truth is - “People without Jesus go to hell.”**

**One more attribute of God is given in this chapter.**

**\*\*\* The LORD alone is Holy!**

**There was no one who was righteous in that city.**

**Ultimately, we see they will receive what is just… next week.**

**Still today – No one is righteous in this city.**

**Romans 3:10 As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”**

**Still today - no one can escape the wrath of God**

**Rom 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness…**

**Judgment is awaiting all of us – we desperately need help!!**

**God, if there are ten – will you spare them – God says yes. You might be thinking, " But even if we pray, there are not ten righteous.”**

**You are right, but there is one righteous! Jesus.**

**How can we be made right before God? How can we know his mercy?**

**Ephesians 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved.**

**The Lord Jesus Holy and righteous was the propitiation – the wrath satisfier. He is the only one – and God spares us**

**Romans 5:9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.**

**1 John 2:2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.**

**John 3:36 - Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.**

**The one holy and merciful – Jesus is here.**