

The Assurance of Faith (Abraham Part 7)

March 4, 2018

I. Review

God speaks to Abraham seven times to give him assurance

Heb 6:13-19 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." (Heb 6:13-19)

The Lord speaks to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-18; 22:1-19)

The Lord appears (and speaks) to Abraham (Gen 12:7, 17:1-27; 18:1-18)

The Lord came to Abraham in a vision (Gen 15:1-21)

The Lord appeared (reveals Himself) **to Abraham:**

I am El Shaddai – "The Almighty God" (7:1)

He is the all-powerful, all-powerful One; totally self-sufficient, all-sufficient One; transcendent; absolute, sovereign ruler;

El Shaddai is used only seven times in the Scriptures
(Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; Ex 6:3; Ez 10:5).

God confirms the covenant (Gen 17:1-27).

Abraham's and Sarah's names are changed (Gen 17:5, 15).

Abram, meaning "exalted father," now became Abraham, "father of many."

Sarai means Contentious; Quarrelsome. My princesses;

Their new identity gave them ability to receive the miracle.

God's command to Abraham:

Walk before Me

Walk = refers to a manner of life, or a way of living. The sense is "live as I want you to live," He was to conduct his life as an open display of faithfulness to the Lord.

Be blameless - means to have integrity.

Circumcision - Abraham and all the males of his household must be circumcised.

Abraham's response:

Abraham fell on his face (17:3)

This is intentional, by this act he is showing reverence respect and worship of God.

Abraham fell on his face and laughs (17:17)

For 24 years Abraham had heard - and believed - the promise - One day he would become the father of a son who would found the nation of promise.

He had tried to force the birth of a legitimate heir (Gen 15 - 16), but God had assured him that the heir would not be an adopted slave [Eliezer (15:4)] nor the child of a surrogate mother [Ishmael (16:11-12)].

But now, after nearly a quarter of a century and at the age of 99 (17:1), Abraham had reached his limit. Even if Sarah were to conceive now, she would be 90 when the baby was born, and he would be 100! At this point it appears the whole thing might be a joke. And so, at last he laughed.

And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!” (Gen 17:18).

Abraham’s plea shows his love for his son Ishmael and his desire that in some tangible way the covenant promise of God would finally come to pass.

Abraham and his household are circumcised (17:23-27).

Again, we see Abraham completely obey the command of the Lord (Gen 12:4; 22:3). On the very day he received the command from God, he did just as the Lord commanded. All the males in his household from little boys to aged men were treated alike.

II. The sixth time God speaks to Abraham (Sarah) (Gen 18:1-15) **Abraham wakes from a nap and sees 3 heavenly visitors (18:1-2).**

One of the men is the LORD.

Gen 18:1 Now the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre,

Gen 18:13 And the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ...

Gen 18:17 The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ...

Jn 8:56 “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

Abraham bows before the three visitors;

Bowing was a method of showing respect [the lesser bowing to the greater], or a method of demonstrating humility; also used to express an attitude of homage.

Abraham’s visitors convey intimate fellowship.

To eat together was important for fellowship, peace offerings, and treaties. When the Lord was ready to specify the fulfillment of the covenantal promise, He came in person and ate in Abraham’s tent. Nothing could more significantly communicate their close relationship.

Jas 2:23 ... “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God. (2Chr 20:7; Isa 41:8).

Abraham shows hospitality (18:3-8).

Washing the feet of the visitors

To see that the feet of guests are washed with cool water was a way of showing hospitality and consideration. Just as important as feeding them when they’re hungry or giving them a place to rest when they’re tired. Not to do so would be discourteous and even insulting.

The meal

After Abraham killed the calf to feed the Lord and his servants, he would have immediately roasted it, for it would have taken too long to boil it. To serve such a rare delicacy to unexpected guests in the middle of the day showed that Abraham well knew who had come to visit him, for almost never was a meal eaten in the heat of the day (Gen 18:1). His knowledge of the nature of his visitors is shown also by the fact that he apparently did not consider himself worthy to eat with them and stood by and watched while they ate (Gen 18:8).

The announcement (18:9-15) - a son would be born to Sarah in a year.

He confirmed His promise by a personal visit - and ate with them - to announce that the time was at hand. It was the annunciation of a humanly impossible birth.

The Lord and Sarah

Sarah hears, [she is listening] (18:9-10)

In her tent Sarah overhears the Lord's promise concerning the birth of Isaac.

Sarah laughs (18:11-12)

Sarah laughs in unbelief.

Like Sarah, we often are taken off guard, laugh, and then out of fear deny that we laugh (have unbelief). But God knows our heart, that we also often find it difficult to believe what He says He will do for you.

Sarah denies that she laughs (18:13–14)

She is confronted by the Lord and denies her response (that she laughed in unbelief). People fail to be truthful when they are afraid.

The Lord's reply

Is anything too hard (better, "marvelous") for the LORD?

Is a child from a dead womb too marvelous for the One who called all things into existence? It is no laughing matter. He can do it. Nothing is incredible for those in covenant fellowship with the Lord because nothing is too difficult for Him.

Sarah versus Mary

Their question:

Gen 18:12 Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

Sarah's question is unbelief, she was saying, "How can this be?"

Lk 1:34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

Mary's question is not unbelief when she asked, "How shall this be?"

God's response:

Gen 18:14 "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Lk 1:37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Why should we doubt the promises of God? "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Jer 32:17 'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You,

Jer 32:27 "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"

Mt 19:26 And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Mk 10:27; Lk 18:27)

What God can not do

Heb 6:18 ... it is impossible for God to lie, ... (Titus 1:2)

2Tim 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.