

RESTORING THE ART OF PLEADING YOUR CASE (Part 5)

In The Footsteps of Abraham

One of the first great intercessors in the Bible was Abraham, and his most famous intercessory prayer was for one of the most sinful places in the ancient world! Sodom and Gomorrah have become synonymous with sin, sexual debauchery, and sodomy, yet the great patriarch of Israel, the "father of faith," interceded passionately that those twin cities of sin be spared! This kind of compassion that led God to say, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" (Gen. 18:17).

When God told Abraham that He planned to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, the patriarch asked God if He planned to destroy the righteous people along with the wicked. Abraham then made the counterproposal, "Will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?" (Gen. 18:24b) When God agrees to relent if 50 righteous people were found, Abraham persisted to drive the numbers lower, knowing only Lot and his family could possibly qualify. The patriarch whittled the number down to 20, and in verse 32 he reached a pivotal place that is important for us to see. Abraham said, "Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?" (Gen. 18:32).

God agrees to Abraham's request, but this passage caused us to wonder, What if Abraham hadn't stopped at ten? God definitely showed no signs of being angry with Abraham over his persistent intercession and pleading on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham could have gone even lower. However, this incident illustrates one of the fundamental laws governing the relationship between God and man: God quits when man quits. - James Goll