



Abraham Eats with God

Genesis 18:1-33, Luke 5:27-32

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An easy way to think about the Old Testament is to remember the key people; and most of them are about 500 years apart from each other. The key people of the Old Testament are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Ezra, and John the Baptist.



These are the key men in the Old Testament; and if you understand their stories and their times; then you will have a good overview of the Old Testament. During this season of Epiphany, we are going to look at times where the Lord Himself intervened in the lives of some Old Testament people. These appearances of God are called **Theophanies**¹; “God appearances”. Specifically, it is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity², who appears on earth before His birth in Bethlehem. In a theophany, the Lord is intervening on behalf of His People. He is saving them, helping them, guiding them, or protecting them.

Today we start with Abraham, the Father of the Jews. God chose Abraham out of all the families on the earth to bless in an unique way.

¹ **Theophany** is two Greek words that means " God | appearance" During this “Epiphany” (Greek for “to | reveal”) season, we will look at appearances of God on earth in the Old Testament that “reveal” God and His love to us. Or in other words, during this Epiphany we will study Theophanies!

² The **Son of God** is the “speaking God” – the *logos* – The “Word” of God who interacts with His People to save them. *Theophanies* are the *pre-incarnate* Son at work on behalf of His People. In this series, we will see Him also as the “Commander of the Lord’s army” and the “Pillar of cloud by day and the Pillar of fire by night.” God the Father is never seen, only heard, as at Jesus’ Baptism and Transfiguration; and God the Holy Spirit is only seen in the form of a dove at Jesus’ Baptism; and tongues of fire at Pentecost. But the Son of God the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, interacts with His People to save them!

God chose Abraham by grace and made **four promises** to him.

1. He would have a **Son** ISSAC
2. His descendants will be a **Great Nation** ISREALITES
3. He will be given a **Promised Land** CANAAN
4. The **Messiah** JESUS! will be one of his descendants and will bless the entire earth.

In the story we heard today from Genesis, Abraham is 99 years old and his wife Sarah is 89 years old. **God appears** at Abraham's tent with two angels with him. At first Abraham believes these are three travelers, and he invites them to stay and have a meal with him. He prepares an elaborate meal for them, one that must've taken several hours to prepare. As the men are talking it soon becomes apparent that one of these travelers is God Himself. The Lord confirms His promise to Abraham and Sarah --- **within a year, they will have a son, even in their old age!** It is so incredible that 89 year old Sarah laughs --- it turns out her miracle baby will be named *Isaac* – with means “*laughter.*” This is a **theophany**: an appearance of the Son of God before His birth in Bethlehem.

God makes an appearance on earth to eat a meal with Abraham! In the Gospels, Jesus does this frequently. He eats with sinners. He has a meal with people. Jesus eats a meal with “**tax collectors and sinners**” to show that they are **forgiven, accepted,** and **reconciled** with God. In Christ, because of His life and death for us, we are welcome in the presence of God. Our sins have been paid for and we are forgiven. We have **peace and fellowship** with God because of the Lord Jesus Christ. This **peace and fellowship** is demonstrated by eating a meal with God.

The Lord has given us a meal as well. The Lord has given His Church a special meal where He is present to forgive our sins. That's Holy Communion. In Holy Communion, the Lord Jesus is present with His Body and Blood in bread and wine to forgive our sins. **Holy Communion is a peace and fellowship meal!** Holy Communion not only demonstrates the **peace and fellowship** we have with God; but it actually gives and creates **peace and fellowship**

with God! Just as God had a meal with Abraham in the Old Testament; and Jesus had a meal with Levi and other tax collectors in the Gospel, so too He has a meal with us sinners in Holy Communion --- a meal to forgive our sins so we are assured that we have [peace and fellowship](#) with God! In fact, Holy Communion is *more than a Theophany*: Holy Communion is the **Real Presence of God**³ for the forgiveness of our sins!

An interesting thing happens after the meal with Abraham. The Lord and His two angels get up and leave in order to go to *Sodom and Gomorrah* of all places! They intend to see for themselves how wicked, immoral and corrupt these two cities really are. The Lord decides to tell Abraham His plan; and Abraham is horrified. He knows how wicked, immoral and corrupt *Sodom and Gomorrah* really are! He knows their immorality and corruption! His nephew Lot even lives there with his family! Depraved homosexuality was rampant in the city! *So Abraham intervenes*; and he prays that the Lord will spare the city.

Abraham pleads that the Lord will spare the city if **50 righteous people** are found; but as he thinks about it, he soon realizes that there is [no where near](#) 50 righteous people in *Sodom and Gomorrah*. So Abraham keeps praying. What about 45, 40, 30, and even 20 righteous people? *You can almost see Abraham racing in his mind trying to count the righteous people he knows in Sodom and Gomorrah*. He soon realizes that 20 righteous people is [way too many](#) so he prays one more time and asks the Lord to spare the city if he can find just 10 righteous people. The gracious Lord heard Abraham's prayer, and mercifully agrees. He will not destroy *Sodom and Gomorrah* if he finds 10 righteous people.

This exchange between the Lord and Abraham turned out to be *terribly bad news* for *Sodom and Gomorrah*; their depravity was so great that not even 10 righteous people could be found; and it was Judgment Day for those two cities as the Lord rained fire and brimstone down on them. *Sodom and Gomorrah* have forever since been warnings of God's wrath and displeasure towards

³ In Lutheran Theology, the term *Real Presence* signifies that Christ is actually, really present with His body and blood in bread and wine to forgive our sins. The term *Real Presence* signals to the world that we believe that Christ is as present with us as He was with His disciples in New Testament times. The term *Real Presence* signals that Christ is really, actually present in the Sacrament as He promised to be when He said, "Take eat, THIS IS MY BODY," "Take, drink, THIS IS MY BLOOD".

homosexuality and immorality. Don't let the world deceive you: homosexuality is an especially rebellious sin that brings God's wrath and judgment on it.

But for us this exchange between the Lord and Abraham is *extremely good news*. This is a beautiful picture of prayer. Like Abraham, you stand in the presence of God in prayer. And like Abraham, you can be bold in your prayers. When Jesus died on the cross, the Temple curtain was torn in two symbolizing that you have direct access to God through faith in Christ. In Christ, nothing stands in your way to the presence of God! In His resurrection, Jesus ushers you into the presence of God so that you can boldly ask God for mercy, grace, and help for yourself and for others.

In prayer, you stand before God like Abraham did!
In prayer, you stand before God with Jesus, your Savior!

Prayer is not just words in the air; prayer is not you speaking into the sky; prayer is not pious, wishful thinking! Prayer is you standing in the immediate presence of God interceding for yourself and for others. You pray for your needs, your families, and your neighbors. You pray for others as if their needs are your needs. You pray knowing that the Lord cares, that He hears and listens, and that He promises to help. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you boldly approach the throne of God and ask for mercy, grace, and help for yourself and for others.

The exchange between the Lord and Abraham is a beautiful picture of prayer and intercession for us to learn from.

In prayer, you stand before God like Abraham did!
In prayer, you stand before God with Jesus, your Savior!

A **Theophany** is a “*God appearance*” – the Son of God on earth before His birth in Bethlehem, to help His people. Today we learn from the theophany to Abraham that we too have *peace and fellowship* with God in a meal that God provides for us; and that like Abraham, we stand in God's presence and intercede for God's mercy, grace and help for ourselves and for others.

Amen!