

## God Uses Worn Out Believers

### Introduction

- A believer may become impatient during a test of faith & devise a plan of folly that is outside the will of God (Gen. 16:1-4a).
- The consequences of a plan of folly are devastating & may affect many people for an extremely long time (Gen. 16:4b-16).
- God is faithful to reaffirm His love & commitment to His people even after some foolish plans have been carried out against His will (Gen. 17:1-22).
- God expects believers to respond to His love & commitment with loving obedience to His ordinances & commands (Gen. 17:23-27).

### I. The Lord Brings Good News of Birth (Gen. 18:1-15)

#### A. Abraham's hospitality before the good news (v. 1-8)

*A theophany is a divine revelation in which God's presence is made visible & recognizable to man. Hospitality is receiving a stranger into one's home & treating him as a special guest. The Lord & 2 angels **appeared** at Abraham's place of residence – miraculous (v. 1-2a). Abraham demonstrated gracious hospitality toward his guests – humility, generosity & love (v. 2b-8). Abraham was personally involved in showing hospitality – “went”, “ran”, “took”, “gave” “took” & “set” (v. 6-8).*

#### B. Sarah's disbelief after the good news (v. 9-15)

*Sarah overheard the Lord prophesy that she would have a son in about 1 year (v. 9-10). This is the first time that a date was given. This is 13 years after the foolish plan with Hagar, yet Sarah still will not believe God (v. 11-12). Just a few days or weeks ago it was Abraham that would not believe (17:17). When the Lord confronts Sarah about her unbelief, she will not confess it (v. 13-15). Sinful fear was the cause of her lying & lack of confession (v. 15). The testing of our faith is to be expected for Christian growth & maturity (Jas. 1:2-4).*

***The Lord's divine nature revealed – His knowledge of the future & thoughts of her heart (v. 10, 13).***

### II. The Lord Brings Sad News of Death (Gen. 18:16-33)

#### A. Abraham finds favor before the sad news (v. 16-21)

*Abraham has proven that He is a friend of God (Is. 41:8). He walks & talks with the Lord from the heart (Gen. 18:16). The Lord reveals His will & plans to His friends (Gen. 18:17-21). God alone knows the right time & way to address wickedness (v. 20-21). Every Christian that humbly & lovingly obeys the Lord is a friend of Christ (Jn. 15:13-14). And every friend of the Lord can know the will & plans of God (Jn. 15:15). Abraham has no advantage on us!*

#### B. Abraham intercedes after the sad news (v. 22-33)

*Abraham is initially concerned about the righteous being destroyed with the wicked (v. 22-25). Abraham continues to intercede for mercy in God's planned wrath (v. 26-33; Hab. 3:2c). A true friend of God must learn to pray for the will of God in mercy (Job 42:8b, 10; Mt. 5:43-45).*

***The Lord's divine nature revealed – His full knowledge of wickedness & His prerogative for judgment or mercy (v. 20-21).***

Gen. 18:1-33

**APPL:** In chapter 17, Abraham considered himself & Sarah too old to fulfill this plan of God for their lives. In chapter 18, Sarah considers herself too old & worn out to fulfill this plan & promise. They both had to learn that nothing is too hard for God; human weakness & frailty does not limit our usefulness to God. Abraham & Sarah had to learn the lesson that Paul would later learn: God's grace is sufficient for any circumstance of life & God's power is actually made perfect in human weakness. God is most glorified when we are exceedingly weak.