

America's Abraham

Genesis 18.17–19

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • June 19, In the year of our Lord, 2016
Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Kevin Michael – Do we have any songs on fatherhood?

Prelude:

I. Last month on Mother's Day,

- A. I did a sermon titled, "America's Deborah,"
- B. referring to Harriet Tubman,
 - 1. who never had any children of her own, but
 - 2. adopted the daughter of her second husband.
 - a) She did not conceive any of her own children, but
 - b) she served as a mother to the 300 people she rescued from slavery.

II. For Father's Day

- A. I want to speak briefly on, "America's Abraham."
- B. For my Mother's Day sermon,
 - 1. I kept the identity of America's Deborah secret
 - 2. until the latter part of my sermon,
 - a) although my precious daughter said
 - b) that she had it figured out during my opening sentence or sentences.

III. You will have no trouble figuring out the identity of America's Abraham.

- A. Like Harriet Tubman, America's Abraham, had no children of his own, but
- B. he adopted his wife's children,
 - 1. whom she had from a previous marriage.
 - 2. He may not have begotten any of his own children, but
 - a) you can consider the people of the United States
 - b) as his children, for
 - (1) we often refer to him as America's Founding Father.

- (2) First, I want to speak on Abraham, because
 - (a) as the father of the Hebrew nation,
 - (b) there was something that he did,
 - i) which America's Abraham also did.
 - ii) Then I speak on America's Abraham, and
 - (1) then on fathers and
 - (2) that they can imitate these two men.

Persuasion:

I. Abraham's Example as a Father

17 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18 since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him" (Gen 18.17–19).

A. Genesis 18 begins with the Lord,

1. in the form of three men,
2. approaching Abraham.

B. As they talk with Abraham,

1. one of them says what I just read from Genesis 18.17–19.
2. Shortly the Lord would destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - a) However, the Lord asked a question:
 - b) Should He hide from Abraham what He was doing or about to do?
 - (1) In verse 18, He explained why He asked that question,
 - (2) that Abraham would become a great and mighty nation, and
 - (3) that all the nations of the Earth would be blessed through him.

3. Up to that point in time, here is what the Lord had promised Abraham,

**3 “I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
(Gen 12.3)**

14 And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. 16 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. 17 Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you” (Gen 13.14–17).

5 Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” 6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness (Gen 15.5–6).

4 “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you” (Gen 17.4–6).

C. Yet, the thing that the Lord questioned

1. on whether they should reveal it to Abraham,
2. was destruction of part of that Land.
 - a) Genesis 18.16 shows the three men facing Sodom,

16 Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way (Gen 18.16).

- b) Then the Lord asked the question
 - (1) on whether to reveal to Abraham
 - (2) what He, the Lord, was about to do.

- (a) He was about to destroy
- (b) Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim (Deu 29.23).
 - i) Abraham knew that he had family in Sodom.
 - ii) Thus, he began to plead for
 - (1) any righteous people in those cities,
 - (2) that the Lord not destroy a city,
 - (a) if enough righteous people are found in it.
 - (b) God promised to multiply Abraham's family, but
 - (c) here was the possibility of losing some members.

D. Then verse 19 explains why the Lord had promised (in verse 18),

- 1. to Abraham a great and mighty nation, and
- 2. that all the families of the Earth should be blessed in him.
 - a) The Lord said that He had known Abraham,
 - b) the kind of father and family leader that he was,
 - (1) commanding his children and his household *after* him,
 - (a) to keep the way of the Lord,
 - (b) to do righteousness, and
 - (c) to do justice.
 - (2) The key is "after him."
 - (a) Some fathers say, "Do as I say, not as I do."
 - (b) However, Abraham could say,
 - i) "Do as I say, because
 - ii) I am already doing it myself."
 - (1) This is one reason why the Lord chose Abraham
 - (2) as the vehicle for blessing all the families of the Earth.

E. His children and his household saw how he lived.

1. They probably wanted to be just like him anyway, but
2. he would instruct them on how to live, and
 - a) they would listen to his instructions, because
 - b) they knew that he was not a hypocrite.
3. He had moral credibility in their eyes.
 - a) Abraham knew that young eyes watched him.
 - b) He knew those young eyes imitated him.
 - c) He knew the eyes of future generations would look to him.

F. America has an Abraham-like father figure.

II. George Washington's Example as a Founding Father

A. George Washington and his fellow-founders knew what they were doing.

1. They were starting a new and *unique* nation,
2. one that was the exception to all others that had arisen in history.

B. Therefore, he knew early on,

1. that as the general to lead the Revolutionary War, and
2. as the president at the Constitutional Convention, and
3. as the first president of the country,
 - a) he would be setting precedents.

C. Since he had a prominent position in the new nation,

1. since he was first in many things, and
2. since the nation had won its independence partly through his efforts,
 - (1) he knew eyes would be on him, but
 - (2) not only in his generation.
 - (a) George Washington saw God's hand in the rising of America.
 - (b) Therefore, he knew that America would not go away soon.
 - i) He knew also that meant many generations into the future

ii) would look to him for an example.

D. He was aware of the position God had put him in, and

1. he did not resist it, but
2. attempted to fulfill it
 - a) to the best of his ability,
 - b) with God's help.

E. Here are somethings, George Washington put into motion:

1. A formal presidency
 - a) Proper dress
 - b) Servants in uniform
 - c) Formal dinners
2. The first cabinet, although not required by the Constitution
3. Served only two terms
 - a) Every president afterwards served no more than two terms
 - b) until Franklin Delano Roosevelt
4. A Farewell Address
5. Neutrality
6. Adding "So help me God," at the end of the presidential oath
7. Mr. President rather than Your Excellency

F. Not surprisingly, Americans consider him our greatest president.

1. If you want to excel as an American, imitate George Washington.
2. That is what a young boy did in the woods of Kentucky.
 - a) Without formal education,
 - b) this boy read, *The Life of Washington*, and
 - (1) it changed that boy forever.
 - (2) He grew up to be America's other greatest president.

III. Your Example as a Father

- A. Perhaps whole nations shall not descend from you as with Abraham.
1. You may not be the political father of a nation as was George Washington.
 2. You may not mean much to the world, but
 - a) you mean the world to a few people in your life.
 - b) They imitate you,
 - (1) perhaps when you do not even realize it.
 - (2) And sometimes it might not be a good example.

- B. Just like Abraham and George Washington,
1. you set precedents for your family.
 2. Even when you are gone,
 - a) many things will stay in place, because
 - b) of you and what you meant to your family.

C. The Book of Proverbs speaks to fathers,

**6 Children's children are the crown of old men,
And the glory of children is their father.
(Pro 17.6)**

1. If the glory of children is their father,
2. it is because they reflect their father.

D. Therefore, we want to bring them up in the Lord,

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6.4).

1. In my opinion, young children want their daddies
2. to live the Bible and to teach them the Bible.

E. Sometimes us fathers have a heavy hand,

21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged (Col 3.21).

1. They will quit trying to please us.
2. They will reject our example.

Exhortation:

I. The greatest thing a father can do for his children

- A. is what Abraham did and
- B. is what George Washington did.
 1. Love God.
 2. Encourage your children to love God.

II. Show them your love for God

- A. by living a godly life,
- B. by being a fully committed Christian.