



**So, I looked for someone ... who
would stand in the gap before
me on behalf of the land**

WEEK ONE – ABRAHAM

Ezekiel 22:30

There is a famous story told about an eight-year old boy from Haarlem in the Netherlands. His father was the lockkeeper and had to make sure that the locks were opened and closed to keep the water in the canals at the right level. One day in Autumn it began to rain heavily, and the canal water subsequently rose. Having been fishing, suddenly the young boy heard the trickling of water and when he looked there was a small hole in the dyke. He knew what would happen if that carried on, so he climbed onto the dyke and put his finger in the hole. It was a long time before anyone found him and by then the water was up to his chest, but he stood firm and his actions saved the town.

An old chorus has the line: “**SO MANY LIVES DEPEND ON WHAT I DO**”. In the story, the young boy saved a town by one seemingly small act. What can we do to be that person whom God is looking for today?

Ezekiel, the prophet, was bringing messages from God to Israel and its wicked leaders, as well as to other countries in the region. The Israelites, having been wonderfully delivered by God, then turned against him and worshipped foreign gods, even sacrificing their children in the fire. Despite all the pleadings and warnings through God’s prophets, they refused to turn back to him. In this verse in Ezekiel 22, God is looking for someone who was prepared to stand in the gap for their land.

In this series, we shall be looking at people throughout Scripture who were willing to stand for God even if that cost meant the loss of their own lives.

- Before we look at Abraham, let us pray that we have the desire and the will to stand in the gap before God on behalf of our families, our church, and our country.

Read Genesis 13

This chapter gives the context for our study. Lot was the nephew of Abraham and both were wealthy men with flocks and herds. Eventually, after altercations between

the herdsmen, Abraham (still called Abram at this point), suggested they separate, and he gave Lot the first choice of where he would take his family, servants and animals. Having seen the fertility of the Jordan plain, Lot opted for this. It had of course, the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

This interaction between the two men says much about their character, Lot, greedy for the best, Abraham, willing to take the inferior land to keep a good relationship between the two of them. Eventually, Lot decides to live in Sodom.

Read Genesis 18

In the first part of the chapter we read that three men (a theophany – a visible appearance of God), came and told Abraham and Sarah that, despite their age and Sarah's previous inability to carry children, God would give them a son. These three men, having looked towards Sodom, then made their way there towards the city, and we have this interesting 'musing' of God.

- What promise given to Abraham does God confirm?
- How, from this passage, would you describe Sodom and Gomorrah?
- What does God want to achieve by destroying these two cities?

Abraham begins to plead with God to prevent any righteous people living being destroyed.

- Why is Abraham so concerned about what happens?
- What image of God is portrayed in this passage?
- God said he would destroy the city, but Abraham is concerned for his nephew and family who live there. Do we pray for our family members who have not allowed Jesus into their lives?
- Are we prepared to commit ourselves to regularly pray for them?

Having come down from 50 people, Abraham eventually settles for 10 righteous people who prevent the destruction of the city. Sadly however, there is only one family, that of Lot.

Read Genesis 19:1-29

It is a chilling account and Lot does not cover himself with any glory by his actions. From the accounts we have read, it seems that Abraham's attempt to be the man standing in the gap on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah was not a great success. However, Lot's family, apart from his wife, was saved from the destruction.

- What can we learn from Abraham's attempt to stand in the gap?
- What does it teach us about Abraham that he was willing to try?

- Try putting yourself in that situation. Would you think it had been a worthwhile effort?
- Have there been occasions in your life when you have tried to stand in the gap on behalf of someone?
- How willing are we to commit ourselves to persevere, as did Abraham, coming to God time and again?

Prayer

Father God help me always to remember that my actions and my life have an impact on others.

