

June 30, 2025

Daily Reflections



I SHALL MAKE A COVENANT WITH YOU

By David C. Robinson, SJ

An Excerpt from Today's First Reading

Abraham spoke up again: "See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes! What if there are five less than fifty innocent people? Will you destroy the whole city because of those five?" He answered, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." But Abraham persisted, saying, "What if only forty are found there?" He replied, "I will forbear doing it for the sake of forty." Then Abraham said, "Let not my Lord grow impatient if I go on. What if only thirty are found there?" He replied, "I will forbear doing it if I can find but thirty there." Still Abraham went on, "Since I have thus dared to speak to my Lord, what if there are no more than twenty?" He answered, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty." But he still persisted: "Please, let not my Lord grow angry if I speak up this last time. What if there are at least ten there?" He replied, "For the sake of those ten, I will not destroy it." The LORD departed as soon as he had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned home.

Reflection

As the Hebrews' identity as a people evolved, they entered into a series of covenants with God, each of which defined the unique understanding they embraced in their journey with the divine. These covenants were grounded in the concrete historical experience of their day-to-day lives, far from the cosmic theology of the Greek communities, or the formal religious structures of the Romans, which evolved in the imperial realms that ruled for centuries. Two of the most influential were the Abrahamic and the Mosaic covenants.

Abraham was the great patriarch who accepted the invitation of God that would bring the people to a promised land (Canaan) where they would become a great and numerous nation, and a blessing to all the people of the earth. Abraham's descendants were to become the "Chosen People" of God. Moses became the father of the Law, the covenant by which Israel developed a moral, social, and religious framework (including the 10 Commandments) that shaped their identity through the ensuing centuries -- and their rise to a position of power in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

Given this prophetic prologue, it seems puzzling that both men raise serious objections to God's intentions for their lives. Abraham engages in a lengthy disagreement over the decision to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and doubts God's promise of a son and heir. Moses resists God's original call, and doubts the people of Israel would heed and trust him. He also shows little confidence in his ability to persuade Pharaoh and the Egyptian court to release the Israelites from captivity.

These complex odysseys of spirit are a graphic study in human failing to trust God with our lives and our vocational discernment. Like Abraham and Moses, we may be adamant in denying that God has created us with the strength, courage, knowledge, and wisdom to carry out the missions that are laid before us. Faith and trust are revealed in the Stump of Jesse, where the messianic sprout of new life is hidden, awaiting the spirit of life that gives courage and an obedient heart. May we learn to hear the voice that empowers us to trust each urging from the Spirit as our unique calling to be God's servant and disciple in each day.



Sodom and Gomorrah
Image by Jose Wesley

For Pondering

- How have you felt yourself called to trust God's calling in your life?
- When have you resisted what appears to be a clear invitation to follow a special path?
- What has resulted when you followed through on the calling that came?

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