

Haphak – The Power of Repentance

Then he said, "Let the Lord not be angry, and I will speak one more time. Suppose 10 are found there?" He answered, "I will not destroy [it] on account of 10." – Genesis 18:32 HCSB

Haphak is generally translated “repentance.” However, English does not do the Hebrew word justice because Haphak also carries within it the meaning “return.” Repentance implies a change of ways; a change of heart; a change of direction.

But we can change from one bad direction to another bad direction. Haphak literally means returning to the Source of Good. It requires not just remorse, nor restitution, nor repentance, but a positive move towards reconciliation.

Genesis 18 tells us that if God had been able to find even ten righteous people in the entire valley of Sodom with its five sinful cities – He would have spared them. The problem was not with God’s mercy or compassion. The problem was with Sodom’s total lack of any intrinsic goodness.

Lot was considered by God to be righteous.¹ Not sinless, mind you, but righteous. He was accounted righteous simply because he heard God’s message, believed it and acted upon it. That’s all it takes. But Lot was the only one. He tried to warn his family and they mocked him. But even though God could only find one righteous man He still saved the lives of that man and two of his daughters.

Haphak has great power. Haphak had the ability to save ten of thousands of lives with only ten righteous souls. Haphak had the ability to save an entire family for the sake of one father. Witness the leverage it carried with Yahweh when Nineveh repented.² Look at its impact when Saul the mass murderer of Christians encountered the Lord on the road to Damascus and was transformed into Paul the Apostle.³ The problem in Genesis 18 was that no one was taking advantage of that power.

History has taught us that it is never too late for Haphak. It is never too late to turn toward heaven and beg for forgiveness. But Sodom never did. Instead they tried to rape the angels. They tried to invade Lot’s home. They mocked his message and though she started out obeying, Lot’s wife ended up turning back and was no more.

I beg you – recognize the sin in your life and turn toward Adonai with Haphak in your heart. Be remorseful for your sin. Repent of it – turn away from it. Turn toward God and seek to be restored to a right relationship with Him. Experience the power of Haphak in your life and be transformed.

¹ 2 Peter 2:7-8

² Jonah 3:10

³ Acts 26:9-19