

PATRIARCHS: Lesson Three, Sodom and Gomorrah

Genesis 18:16 – Genesis 19

Subject: God confided in Abraham, destroyed Sodom, and rescued Lot.

Main Idea: God has given fair warning of sin's dire consequences.

Principles:

1. *God is a consuming fire to the wicked but a friend to the righteous.*
2. *The Judge of the Earth knows and will reveal what is in our hearts.*

Introduction

Most of us do not enjoy stories with bad endings. However, the Bible tells the truth. It gives us the full picture of reality – the good and bad alike. The account of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18-19 is not a pleasant one. *But because God loves us, He has recorded it to give us fair warning that sin has dire consequences.* He warns us through our consciences, as well as in His word. But the Bible story in Genesis 18-19 is not the first to introduce the concept of judgment.

- In the *Beginnings* study (which covers Genesis 1-11) we saw God passing judgment as early as the third chapter of the Bible. Sin entered the world when the first human beings, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God. As a result, God removed them from the paradise where they had enjoyed perfect fellowship with their Creator. Furthermore, because of their broken relationship with God, their bodies immediately began the deterioration process that ends (for all of us) in death.
- As the earth became more populated, the impact of sin multiplied. Eventually, humanity was so thoroughly depraved that, Genesis 6-8 tells us God destroyed every living being, except the one lone righteous man and his small family, by flood.

The New Testament speaks of the two events of God's judgment by Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as warnings to all people that God *must* and *will* judge sin (Matthew 10:15, 11:23-24; Luke 17:28-29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7). He is a holy God. His goodness and justice demand payment for sin; it cannot be overlooked.

- When Jesus died on the Cross, God's demand for justice was met. But His payment is only credited to the accounts of those individuals who choose to receive Christ's payment on their behalf. Sin has so deceived and corrupted the human heart that most people reject God's peace offering. Deep within them, they do not want to renew a relationship with their Creator, for doing so will put them in debt to Him. They do not want God's rule over their lives. They prefer self-rule. Therefore, they deceive themselves about their need and refuse, even mock, the idea of future judgment.
- The accounts of the Flood and Sodom and Gomorrah were recorded as historical reminders and warnings to us that God *does* and *has* judged sin, and that each person will face a *future, final judgment*.

Our last lesson covered the first half of Genesis 18, introducing a conversation between God and Abraham. The first part of their conversation was about God's promise to give Abraham and Sarah a son within a year. This lesson begins with the second half of that conversation, in which Abraham and God converse about God's impending judgment of Sodom.

I. **The Lord Interacted with Abraham** – Genesis 18:16-33

A. **The Lord Considered His Plan** – 18:16-21

- i. Background: The earlier verses of Genesis 18, covered in the last lesson, indicated that three “men” came to visit Abraham. Verses 10 and 13 show that one of these three was the Lord (a theophany). Glancing ahead at Genesis 19:1, we learn that the other two were angels. As the story unfolds, it becomes obvious that these two left Mamre, where Abraham was settled, to investigate Sodom as divine representatives.
- ii. The Lord Considered Abraham: 18:17-19 records the Lord’s thoughts about whether or not to reveal His plans to Abraham.
 1. *Sharing His Plans*: The Lord is in no way obligated to share His plans with His friends. Yet He does so: He has revealed Himself to all humankind in the Scriptures and in the person of Jesus Christ. The Bible also reveals His plan for human history.
 2. *God’s Reasoning about Abraham*:
 - a. In verse 18, the Lord said Abraham would be a great nation and all nations on earth would be blessed through him. Secondly (18:19), the Lord said he had chosen Abraham so that his descendants and household would be influenced by him to serve the Lord.
 - b. Based on these statements, it seems the Lord chose to share His plans with Abraham because of the opportunity Abraham would have to pass on information about God’s character and plans to the many people who would descend from and be influenced by him. Specifically, it seems He expected Abraham to instruct his posterity regarding God’s role as Judge of all mankind and His justice in destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. *This insight would exalt God and give fair warning that, eventually, all sinners face judgment.*
 - c. God instructed Abraham in His ways so that, through him and his family, every nation might be blessed with the knowledge of the one true God. It has always been God’s purpose to bring salvation to people of *all* nations, tribes, languages, genders, and races. The New Testament tells us that members of Christ’s church now bear the responsibility for instructing others in the knowledge of God.
- iii. The Lord Considered Sodom
 1. *Sodom’s Wickedness*: Earlier in Genesis, we learned that Sodom, although in a fertile area, was a wicked city east of Canaan. We were told the sin of the Sodomites was great and grievous to the Lord, but *despite this*, Lot chose to live near Sodom when he separated from Abraham (13:10-13).

2. *God's Decision to "Go Down"*: Verses 20-21 of chapter 18 tell us the Lord determined to "go down" to visit Sodom and Gomorrah before passing judgment.
 - a. The behavior of the residents of the region was so bad that the Lord heard an outcry against them.
 - b. The Lord did not "go down" to these cities because He didn't know all that was going on there. As the story continues, we see that He did so in order to rescue Lot and to *prove His justice* in condemning these very wicked cities.

B. The Lord Converses with Abraham – 18:22-33

i. Abraham's Position Before God

1. Once this decision to "go down" to Sodom was decreed by the Lord, the two "men" left for the city, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord (18:22).
2. After working our way through the entire account, we realize that more than one contrast is emphasized.
 - a. First, Abraham's intimate friendship with God stands in sharp relief against God's judgment of the Sodomites.
 - b. The second contrast is between two "righteous" men: Abraham and Lot. 2 Peter 2:7 calls Lot a righteous man. It is important to recall that "righteousness," when applied to people in the Bible, refers not to a perfected state of being but to a *right relationship* with God, one that occurs by faith.
 - i. Abraham was "standing before the Lord." He is a picture of every person who, by faith, has made friendship with God his or her highest priority.
 - ii. In Genesis 19 we learn that Lot barely escaped judgment. Lot was saved because he was in right standing with God, by faith. But, unlike Abraham, he made decisions that compromised the priority of his friendship with God.

ii. Abraham's Intercession with God

1. Abraham, believing God was just, sought to understand *more about* His mercy. Would God delay judgment on the ungodly for the sake of a few righteous people?
2. Abraham first asked God to spare Sodom if as few as fifty righteous people could be found there. He could not believe that God would destroy the righteous with the wicked. He concluded, "Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
3. The Lord agreed to spare Sodom for the sake of fifty righteous people.

4. Humbly (“though I am nothing but dust and ashes”), Abraham next asked the Lord if He would save the city if there were five less righteous people in Sodom than that – only forty-five. God, again, answered affirmatively.
5. After that, Abraham pleaded with God by diminishing degrees of ten – “for the sake of forty,” then thirty, then twenty, then “what if only ten can be found there?”
 - a. Although persistent, Abraham never failed to intercede humbly: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes” (18:27); “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak” (18:30); “Now that I have been so bold” (18:31); and “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more” (18:32).
 - b. The Lord responded to each plea affirmatively, ultimately agreeing He would not destroy Sodom if a mere ten righteous people could be found there.
6. The Bible does not say why Abraham didn’t ask the Lord to spare Sodom for the sake of less than ten righteous people.
 - a. Some have suggested that Abraham had Lot’s family of six in mind (including two sons-in-law), assuming that a meager number of four additional people could possibly be found there. Maybe Lot even had sons who are not mentioned.
 - b. Perhaps the Spirit of God impressed on him not to push any further. Abraham understood that unlimited mercy on God’s part would make Him unjust. As K.A. Matthew (*New American Commentary*) states, “Was there a point at which unlimited mercy became a shallow sentimentalism, obviating the justice of God against the wicked?”ⁱ
 - c. God judges justly. Like Job and David (other Old Testament figures who argued with God), Abraham had to trust that only God had the “legitimate vantage point from which to govern the moral universe.”ⁱⁱ In the end, neither God’s mercy nor His justice was diluted, for the *one* righteous person was spared (with his daughters), while the wicked were punished.
7. The conversation ended with God’s last word – He would not destroy Sodom for the sake of ten righteous people. After this, the Lord departed, and Abraham returned home.
8. God shared His plans with His friend, Abraham. As it turned out, the content of this conversation was retold and recorded so that people of all time would have fair warning that sin has dire consequences. Judgment awaits us.

C. Summary Regarding Abraham's Spiritual Growth

- i. Indicated by his position: It is obvious that Abraham was concerned for Lot. But he did not travel to Sodom to warn Lot. Instead, he knew his best hope was in interceding for Lot directly with God. So when the angels left for Sodom, Abraham remained standing before the Lord. His faith in God's sovereign control and justice had grown.
- ii. Indicated by his concern
 1. As we discovered in the last lesson, Abraham addressed God with concerns over God's specific promises to him. There was nothing wrong with this. However, as Abraham's friendship with God developed and his faith deepened, we see that his concerns were less self-centered. The conversation in Genesis 18 indicates Abraham's concern for *others*, to include *God's own reputation*.
 2. Spiritually immature people focus primarily on their own interests, while the mature have broader vision. Abraham's series of bold questions is another indication that he was developing spiritually. His friendship with the Lord was becoming increasingly intimate.

Principle: *God is a consuming fire to the wicked but a friend to the righteous.*

The New Testament indicates that people will be judged according to what they know (Matthew 10:5-15, 11:20-24; Romans 2:12). But it also teaches that *all people* have enough information about God in creation and in their God-given consciences to be convicted of rejecting Him (Romans 1-2). Those who live outside a relationship of friendship with God have good reason for the many fears that sin stirs up: judgment awaits them.

Abraham was greatly concerned about Lot and God's judgment of Sodom. But his conversation with God in Genesis 18 shows that he had no fear for his own life. Abraham was God's friend.

- 1 John 4:17-18 explains that the more we know and experience the love of God, the more our lives are free of fear, for (as verse 18 says), "fear has to do with punishment." Those who know the love of God can live free of fear and "have confidence on the day of judgment" (v. 17).
- Romans 8:1 declares, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."

Application: Are you living free from fear of condemnation? Friends of God do! They *believe God*, when He says Christ has freed them from their death sentence.

Transition: The Bible says both Abraham and Lot were righteous (Genesis 15:6, 2 Peter 2:7). But in chapter 19 we see that God's judgment of Sodom exposed Lot's heart, revealing that he had loved other things more than he had loved God.

II. The Lord Rescued Lot – Genesis 19:1-38

A. Lot Entertained Angels – 19:1-13

i. Lot's Position in Sodom

1. 19:1 tells us that when the angels arrived in Sodom, Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. Lot invited them to his house, which, we learn (19:25), was also in the city. When Lot first separated from Abraham, he “pitched his tents near Sodom” (13:12). In the intervening timespan, Abraham rescued Lot from Kedorlaomer (14:16-17). In chapter 19 it is clear that Lot had moved into the city. Warren Wiersbe observes, “The first time God rescued Lot, he was a prisoner of war (14:12, 16); and he went right back into Sodom. That painful experience should have warned him that he was out of the will of God; but if Lot heard the warning, he certainly did not heed it.”ⁱⁱⁱ
2. Furthermore, Lot's position at the gateway indicates that he was “an integrated citizen of Sodom, if not a leader.”^{iv} Indeed, “Judges usually sat by the city gates, public places (cf. Job 29:7, 12–17) where legal and business transactions were finalized (cf. Gen. 23:18).”^v Therefore, “Lot sitting at the gate may have meant that he was an elder or judge in the city.”^{vi} (Ruth 4 also supports this idea.)

ii. The Bible's Commentary on Lot

1. Since 2 Peter 2:7-8 tells us that Lot was “a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless,” it is possible that Lot sought some measure of positive influence on the Sodomites by his position. Sadly, in the end he had none (19:14).
2. We certainly cannot characterize Lot as a man who was not a believer in Yahweh because of what Peter says about him. But what does seem true is that he made some bad choices. Lot may have despised the Sodomites ways, yet still he tolerated them in order to personally benefit in whatever way he could from the land and culture.
3. Once again, Warren Wiersbe's comments are helpful: *Had Lot gone to Sodom because God directed him, his being there would have fulfilled divine purposes. After all, God put Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, and Esther in Persia; and their presence turned out to be a blessing. Worldliness is not a matter of physical geography but of heart attitude (1 John 2:15–17). Lot's heart was in Sodom long before his body arrived there. No doubt he got his first love for the world when he went to Egypt with Abraham (Gen. 13:1, 10), and he never overcame it.*^{vii}

iii. Lot's Hospitality

1. Lot did what was customary in offering the two strangers to Sodom hospitality in his home. Unlike the feast Abraham had prepared for them earlier in the day, Lot's meal was simple and hastened – bread without yeast.
2. There is no indication that Lot recognized these “men” as angels until later, when they struck the men of Sodom blind and announced impending judgment (19:11).

iv. The Sin of the Sodomites

1. Before the evening ended, the moral condition of the Sodomites was evident. “All the men from every part of the city of Sodom – both young and old – surrounded the house” calling to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them” (literally, so that “we will *know* them”).
 - a. First, we note that it was not a few men, nor was it was only the young or the old men; it was *all* the men of Sodom from *every* part of the city who came to Lot's door. The sin of Sodom had reached a saturation point.
 - b. Second, the nature of their sin is emphasized: that of homosexual gang rape.
2. Bill Arnold (*Encountering the Book of Genesis*) has addressed the question of the nature of Sodom's sin:

Under pressure from pro-homosexual groups, some modern scholars have argued the sin of Sodom described in Genesis 18-19 was not homosexuality. Instead, it is argued, the sin of the Sodomites was a more general disorder of society organized against God, or one of abuse of justice.

He goes on to explain,

The Hebrew word 'know' (yada) in the expression, 'we will know them' (19:5), has a wide range of meaning, and it is true that the word is used for sexual intercourse in only a minority of occurrences. However, context is the most important feature in determining the meaning of a given word in any particular context. The term 'know' clearly has sexual connotations elsewhere in Genesis (4:1, 17, 25; 24:16) and seems the most likely meaning here in light of Lot's response. The offer of his virgin daughters, 'who have never slept with a man' (19:8, literally, 'who have not known a man') makes no sense otherwise. The use of the term 'know' with a clear sexual meaning only three verses later seems to settle the issue.

- a. Judges 19 tells a similar story, in which “knowing” someone obviously refers to having sex.
 - b. Finally, Jude 7 says, “Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.”
 - c. The evidence overwhelmingly supports that homosexuality was the sin of Sodom. The word “sodomy,” used today to describe the homosexual act, was derived from name of the city Sodom.
3. The Bible teaches that homosexuality is a perversion of the natural order and that it is sin in passages such as Leviticus 18:22, 20:13 and Romans 1.
- a. Nowhere does Scripture declare it an unforgivable sin. But, historically, its prevalence in any society is characteristic of serious spiritual and social deterioration, sometimes preceding the overthrow of a culture (Sodom, Canaan, Phoenicia, Rome.)
 - b. However, God is patient, not wanting any to perish. He gives ample opportunity for confession and repentance. And Christians who treat homosexuals, or those trapped in any other sin, without compassion are not following Christ’s example. (See John 8:1-11.)
- v. Lot’s Interaction with the Sodomites
1. There doesn’t seem to be any good explanation for Lot’s offer of his virgin daughters as substitutes for his guests. Even considering any cultural expectation of obligation to protect one’s guests, or the possibility Lot thought because his daughters were engaged to Sodomites they would somehow avoid being harmed,^{viii} his willingness to put them at risk is deplorable!
 2. The Sodomites accused Lot of judging them, then determined to break down the door to get what they wanted.
- vi. The Angels’ Intervention: The angels pulled Lot back into the house and miraculously struck all the men outside the door blind, preventing them from finding the door.

B. Lot Fled Sodom – 19:14-29

- i. The Angel’s Warning: No more evidence was needed to convict the Sodomites. The angels told Lot to gather any relatives living in the city because the city was about to be destroyed.

ii. Lot and His Sons-in-law

1. Lot went out and spoke to the men who were betrothed to his daughters. (The reader wonders whether they were among those at the door!)
2. Here we find another sad commentary about Lot. When he warned his sons-in-law that the Lord was about to destroy the city, they “thought he was joking.” Such a response tells us that, although the sins of Sodom were inwardly distressing to Lot (2 Peter 2:7-8), he had not proved a credible witness for God to his community.

iii. Lot’s Hesitation and Plea for Compromise

1. When the angels urged Lot to quickly leave the city with his daughters, Lot hesitated. No explanation is given, but his hesitation further depicts him unfavorably. While Abraham took the information God gave him about Sodom’s destruction seriously and acted immediately to intercede for Lot, *Lot hesitated to act even after the angels had proved themselves by striking the Sodomites blind!*
2. The angels mercifully and forcefully took his family by the hand and led them out of the city, instructing them to flee to the mountains without looking back. They are told not to stop in the plain. God must have planned to destroy all the minor cities of the plain surrounding Sodom.
3. Lot pled to be spared from traveling the long distance to the mountains, saying he couldn’t get there in time to escape the disaster. He asked, instead, for permission to run to the small town of Zoar. (By so doing, he was asking God to spare Zoar.)
 - a. Also known as Bela, this was one of the 5 cities (including Sodom and Gomorrah) of the plain whose people were defeated by Kedorlaomer and then rescued by Abraham in Genesis 14.
 - b. God mercifully spared Zoar for Lot’s sake.
 - c. As for Lot, he hadn’t enough faith to believe God could enable him to get to the place He was sending him.

iv. Fire and Brimstone

1. 19:24 says, “Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah.” Some versions use the words, “fire and brimstone” to describe what “rained down.” Trying to understand the exact nature of the destruction, some have suggested that deposits of sulfur erupted from the earth *due to an earthquake* (“tar pits” are mentioned in 14:10), and then showered down out of the heavens in flames of fire (cf. Luke 17:29).^{ix x}

2. Leon Wood describes the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and shows how the biblical description fits geological and other data:

The destruction of Sodom was effected by a rain of “brimstone and fire.” In examining the meaning of the phrase, scholars have ruled out volcanic action on the basis of geological indications. Many believe that it refers to an earthquake resulting in an enormous explosion. Several factors are pointed out as favoring this view. The idea of brimstone and fire suggests incendiary materials raining down upon the city as the result of an explosion. Another descriptive word used is “overthrew” (Gen. 19:29), and this fits the thought of an earthquake. That Abraham saw smoke rising in the direction of the city indicates that there was a fire. Inflammable asphalt has long been known in the area. Records from ancient writers speak of strong sulfuric odors, which suggest that quantities of sulfur were there in past time. Further, the whole Jordan Valley constitutes an enormous fault in the earth’s surface, given to earthquake conditions. It’s possible, then, that God did see fit to miraculously time an earthquake at this precise moment, which would have released great quantities of gas, mixed sulfur with various salts found in abundance, and measurably increased the flow of asphalt seepage. Lightning could have ignited all, and the entire country consumed as indicated.^{xi}

v. Lot’s Wife

1. Lot’s wife’s “looking back” indicates a longing in her to return to, or at the least a regret in leaving, Sodom. Apparently, she had grown quite comfortable there. It was her home. She was more concerned about leaving behind the comforts of Sodom than she was about obeying God. Whether or not she was involved in the sin of Sodom, she secretly loved the city. She stands as a symbol for all time of the demise of those who love the world more than God.
2. The only explanation of her death offered is that “she became a pillar of salt.”

vi. Abraham’s View:

1. The next morning, Abraham, no doubt anxious to see whether ten righteous people had been found by God in Sodom, looked down over the plain and observed the dense smoke rising.

2. Verse 29 gives us this commentary: “So when God destroyed the cities... He remembered Abraham, and He brought Lot out of the catastrophe...”
 - a. Since Lot had entered a relationship with God, he will be free from eternal condemnation.
 - b. But he only averted the natural consequences of his decision to live in Sodom – an early death – because God showed him mercy for Abraham’s sake.

vii. The Bible’s Revelation about God’s Judgment

1. A holy and just God cannot leave sin unpunished. Ultimately, God will judge each person individually (2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11-15). This does not mean righteous people are not affected by disaster. All of us are victims of the curse of sin on the world (Ecclesiastes 9:2).
2. *God’s judgment isn’t always immediate.*
 - a. Genesis 6:3 indicates that God waited an additional 120 years after He decreed judgment in Noah’s day in order to give people time to repent (Genesis 6:3).
 - b. God waited more than 400 years after He foretold the Canaanites’ destruction before it was carried out (Genesis 15:16).
 - c. In both cases, annihilation occurred as a judgment by God when sin had “reached its full measure” (Genesis 15:16; 18:20).
 - d. Addressing the question of why God delays judgment, 2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”
3. Although His judgment isn’t always immediate, God’s judgment is *certain* and it will be *complete*.
 - a. *Certain*: Luke 17, 2 Peter 2, and Jude 7 tell us the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are examples to us of what will happen on a larger scale in the future! The New Testament compares these events to the Second Coming of Christ and His final judgment. Like the Old Testament judgments, these New Testament events are described as
 - i. sudden and unexpected,
 - ii. and resulting from God’s wrath over sin.

- iii. The Bible is exceedingly clear that a future Day of Judgment is coming. (Matthew 12:41-42, Acts 17:31, Romans 2:16, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Timothy 4:1, Hebrews 9:27; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 20:12)
- b. *Complete*:
 - i. *Based on Complete Knowledge*: The basis of God's judgment will be His absolute and complete knowledge of every circumstance and of every person's thoughts, actions and motives. Because of this, not one of His judgments will be unjust, even in the smallest degree. Nothing will be overlooked.
 - 1. Jesus said that if the miracles He did in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, the Sodomites would have repented, concluding, "*it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment*" (Matthew 11:24).
 - 2. This is one of the places that reveal future judgment to be *more severe for people who have had opportunity to hear about Jesus* than for those (like the Sodomites) who had not.
 - 3. Jesus' words also indicate that worse things can happen to a person than merely their physical death. Future judgment will involve permanent separation from God in a place (hell) where none of God's benefits can be found – no light, no comfort, no joy, no peace, no communion with others, no sense of satisfaction, no fulfillment of any desire or need. *Separation from the God they chose to reject will be just as they wished – complete.*
 - ii. *Based on One's Relationship with God through Christ*: God's Judgment will be based on whether or not a person's sins have been pardoned by His Son Jesus.
 - 1. Augustine's explanation of sin helps us understand the basis upon which we will be judged:
 - a. *Sin* is the root of my problem and a reference to my corrupted nature, which I received from Adam.
 - b. *Sins* are the fruit of my problem and a reference to those *actions resulting from* my corrupted nature.

2. The reason it's important to understand this distinction is that God will not deal with us favorably concerning our sins until we allow him to treat our sin nature.
 - a. Those who *have not* had their sin nature dealt with by receiving the pardon offered them through faith in Jesus will be judged according to their sins (their own personal actions) and face eternal punishment according to them.
 - b. Those who *have* had their sin nature dealt with, as Abraham did, by entering a personal relationship with God by faith, will be judicially pardoned for Jesus' sake. These people will have their lives evaluated for the purpose of receiving reward and will enter eternal joy in God's presence (Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10).

C. Lot Engaged in Incest – 19:30-38

i. Lot's Departure from Zoar

1. Although Lot begged the angels to allow him to flee to Zoar rather than the mountains (where they had directed him), the first thing recorded about Lot once the catastrophe was over was that he *left Zoar* and went to live *in the mountains!*
2. We are told he did this because he was afraid to stay in Zoar. Let us take warning from this, lest a similar statement about *our* lack of faith in response to God's instructions is also recorded in God's Heavenly record!

ii. Lot's Daughters' Deceit

1. Lot's daughters saw that their father took no action to find husbands for them after Sodom was destroyed. So they took matters into their own hands with the goal of "preserving our family line through our father."
2. Lot's daughter's determined to continue their father's line by deception and perversion. The account tells us they secretly plotted to get their father drunk and have sexual relations with him. Their actions are not entirely surprising considering all we have learned.

- a. Lot was a righteous man who failed to lead his family wisely. He raised his daughters in Sodom and betrothed them to Sodomites. Their mother loved Sodom. Surely the choices of their parents and the moral conditions in Sodom greatly impacted their own characters.
- b. Additionally, their father hadn't valued their sexual purity. He offered them for sexual pleasure to the Sodomites. One can only assume that this encouraged disrespect for their father and of themselves!
- c. Finally, Lot took no action to find his daughters husbands. Surely Abraham would have had willing men within his large household (even if they were not Abraham's own descendants.) Shouldn't Lot have much preferred this to leaving his daughters husbandless?
- d. Lot's own poor past decisions and his daughters' personal lack of integrity are both to blame for the shameful way the story ended.

iii. Lot's Descendants

1. The account of Lot in Genesis 19 ends by informing us that the Moabite and Ammonite people groups were the descendants of Lot's daughters.
2. Considering that Genesis 18 began with God's confirmation to Abraham and Sarah that a son would be miraculously born to them within a year, the story about the means by which Lot had his sons borne to him serves as a final contrast between the lives of Abraham and Lot.

Summary Statement: The story of Lot is shameful.

- Neither Abraham nor Lot will face eternal condemnation on the Day of God's Final Judgment because they were both believers.
- Sin not only has eternal consequences, it also has temporal ones. Many of these we see in the common human struggle with disease, poverty, and injustice. But some of sin's temporal consequences for us as individuals result directly from our own foolish choices. Believers will be spared from condemnation at the Final Judgment, but they are not always spared the natural consequences of their actions in this life. Lot's decision to live in Sodom cost him dearly.
- We don't know what happened to Lot personally after his sons were born. Perhaps he was awakened to his foolishness and repented. The Lord knows. He knows everything – every thought and attitude of our hearts.
- Abraham knew this when he implored, "Will not the Judge of all the Earth do what is right?" (18:25)

Principle: *The Judge of the Earth knows and will reveal what is in our hearts.*

It may be easy to read Lot's story and judge him for stupidity. But if Lot, a man the apostle Peter called righteous, could fail in these ways, how much more easily could we?

1 John 2:15, 17 warns us, "*Do not love the world or anything in the world. . . . [for] the world and its desires [lusts] pass away.*" This was Lot's error. He loved the pleasures of the world too much. Knowing the difference between enjoying the good gifts God gives us and clinging to them is a personal matter that requires self-examination. Anything we love more than we love Him is an idol. Idolatry is sin.

Every Christian must honestly answer the question, "What matters to me the very most?" Often the crises in our lives reveal the truth about whether God is most important to us.

Illustration: Eric Liddell was born to his Scottish missionary parents on January 16, 1902 in Tientsin, China. At age five, he and his older brother began attending the "School for the Sons of Missionaries" outside London. As Eric grew, his natural athletic ability became more and more apparent, and as a Christian, he used his ability as a platform to glorify God. The naturally shy Eric was repeatedly asked to speak at evangelistic events. People who never would have otherwise attended came just to see him.

Eventually, Liddell was sent to represent the UK and Scotland as a runner in the 1924 Olympics in Paris. The 100-meter race was his specialty. But in the fall of the preceding year, Eric learned that the Olympic Committee scheduled his signature event for a Sunday. Biographer Eric Metaxas writes, "As far as he was concerned, Sunday was the Lord's Day – not a day for playing games – even the Olympic Games. Instead, it was a day for rest and worship...As he saw it, running in the Olympics on that day was out of the question..."^{xii} Eric also gave up the opportunity to run two relay races that were scheduled for Sunday. Despite much pressure from the British Olympic Committee, he was unmovable in his resolve – he would not race on Sunday.

The 400-meter event was scheduled for a Thursday, and although Eric began to train for this longer race, he was not expected to win it. When the day of the that race finally came, Eric drew the outside lane, "widely considered the worst possible position...In his dressing room at the stadium, Liddell unfolded the note [a relative stranger had passed to him] and read the following: 'It says in the Old Book, *Him that honours me, I will honour* (sic)...'"^{xiii} Eric won the gold medal that day in the 400! "Not only did he win, but he beat his nearest competitor by the unfathomable distance of five meters" setting a new world record.^{xiv}

Eric Liddell decided he loved God more than he loved anything the world could offer him. Ironically, as Metaxas points out, “had Eric Liddell run that 100-meter race, as he was urged to do, he would be largely forgotten today outside of Scotland,” as most Olympic runners usually are.^{xv}

But the 1924 Olympics were hardly the crowning glory of Liddell’s life. Eric returned to China in 1925 where he served the Lord until his death in a Japanese internment camp in 1943. Long before his internment, long before his decision to return to China, Eric had decided what he loved most, and it was not the pleasures the world offered him. He put God first.

When Lot was faced with the decision of where he would live, Lot made his decision on the basis of what looked good to him. He thought the well-watered plain near Sodom would benefit him most (Genesis 13:10-13). What seemed, from a sensual perspective, to be to his benefit, actually resulted in his shame.

Conclusion

Friend, have you made your decision? Have you received Christ’s pardon so you can live free from fear of God’s final judgment?

If so, have you determined what you will love most? It is unlikely that the crises you face in life will be the time when such decisions are made. Rather, they will be the time when the attitude already contained in your heart is revealed.

What pleasures of this world are you most tempted to cling to? Many pleasures, in and of themselves, are good gifts of God for which we should be thankful. They *should* be enjoyed. But every Christian must examine his or her own heart to know whether these gifts have actually become “loves” that replace the position in our heart to be reserved for God alone. We have no idea what price we may pay for loving them. In fact, we probably will not fully know what loving them has cost us until we stand before God. And we will not be able to say we were not warned.

ⁱ Mathews, K. A. (2005). *Genesis 11:27–50:26* (Vol. 1B, p. 227). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

ⁱⁱ Mathews, K. A. (2005). *Genesis 11:27–50:26* (Vol. 1B, p. 228). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Be Obedient*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1991, S. Ge 19:1

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- ^{iv} Mathews, K. A. (2005). *Genesis 11:27–50:26* (Vol. 1B, p. 232). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- ^v Ross, A. P. (1985). Genesis. (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Eds.) *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- ^{vi} Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). *Manners & Customs of the Bible* (p. 29). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.
- ^{vii} Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Be Obedient*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1991, S. Ge 19:1
- ^{viii} Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Vol. 1, p. 149). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- ^{ix} Walvoord, John F.; Zuck, Roy B.; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:61
- ^x Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.
- ^{xi} Richards, Larry; Richards, Lawrence O. (1987) *The Teacher's Commentary (S 59)*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.
- ^{xii} Metaxas, Eric (2013). *7 Men and the Secret of Their Greatness* (p. 66). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- ^{xiii} Metaxas, Eric (2013). *7 Men and the Secret of Their Greatness* (p. 69). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- ^{xiv} Metaxas, Eric (2013). *7 Men and the Secret of Their Greatness* (p. 71). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- ^{xv} Metaxas, Eric (2013). *7 Men and the Secret of Their Greatness* (p. 58). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.