

## *Patriarchs Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Three: Sodom & Gomorrah – Genesis 18:16-19:38*

#### Read Genesis 18:16-33.

- 1) Reread Genesis 13:8-13 and 14:10-12, 21-24. What do we learn about Sodom and Gomorrah from these passages and from chapter 18? **Lot chose the land near Sodom when he and Abraham separated (Genesis 13). Apparently, it was a very fertile area (13:10), east of Canaan (13:11-12). “The men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord” (13:13). The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were among the five kings who rebelled against Kedorlaomer (King of Elam) in Genesis 14. The area around Sodom and Gomorrah was full of tar pits (14:10). The king of Sodom wanted Abraham to keep the spoils of Sodom and give him back the people (14:21). The sin of the Sodomites was great and grievous to the Lord (18:20). Abraham thought there might be as few as ten people in Sodom who were righteous (18:23-32).**
- 2) From verses 17-19:
  - a) What reason did the Lord give for deciding to tell Abraham what He was about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah (verse 18)? **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. Based on these statements, it seems the Lord was choosing to share His plans with Abraham because of the opportunity Abraham would have to pass on information about God’s character and deeds to the many people who would descend from and be influenced by him. Specifically, it seems He expected Abraham to share with his posterity the just reasons why He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah – that their sin was great and that God justly examined (went down to look) them before He passed judgment on them. This would exalt God in the eyes of all who learned of Sodom and Gomorrah’s destruction.**
  - b) How does this relate to God’s purpose in choosing Abraham (verse 19) and His ongoing purpose for people today? (See also Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 78:2-7; Psalm 105:1, Matthew 28:19-20; John 3:16 and Galatians 3:8.) **From the beginning, it has always been God’s purpose to bring salvation people of all nations, tribes, languages, races, and genders. God blessed one man, Abraham, so that through him and through his family (whom Abraham would instruct in the ways of the Lord), every nation might be blessed with the knowledge of the one true God. This is still God’s will for us today: that we, His people, bless others by conveying to them in word and deed the truth of the gospel. Foremost among those we disciple should be our own children.**
- 3) Specifically, what are you doing (or will you begin doing) to direct others to know and keep the ways of the Lord? **Personal sharing**

#### Read Genesis 18:22-33.

- 4) Recall Abraham’s previous questions in Genesis 15:2, 8 and 17:17. How is the focus of the series of questions Abraham asks in Genesis 18:22-33 different from his previous concerns? What does this tell you about Abraham’s spiritual growth? **Previously, Abraham was concerned about God keeping His promises for his own sake. In Abraham’s later questions (chapter 18), he showed concern for God’s reputation in the world and for other righteous people. Spiritually immature people focus primarily on their own needs. Spiritually mature people have broader vision and are concerned with God’s interests in the world and the needs of others. Abraham’s series of bold questions also indicates that he was developing spiritually – becoming increasingly intimate with the Lord.**
- 5) Do your prayers primarily reflect the kinds of concerns Abraham had in 15:2, 8 and 17:7 or the more mature focus of 18:22-33? How might you change or expand a prayer you have recently been praying to reflect this more mature perspective? **Personal sharing regarding need for spiritual growth and bigger vision, especially in prayer, so that we ask the Lord to help us see the world as He sees it, mature us beyond a self-centered focus, increase our intimacy with Him, and burden us with the things that burden His heart.**

Read Genesis 19:1-29.

- 6) Compare verses 5 and 13 with Leviticus 18:22 and Romans 1:18, 26-27. Summarize the teaching of these verses on homosexuality. **The clear teaching of Scripture is that homosexuality is a perversion of the natural order and that it is sin. Nowhere does Scripture declare it an unforgivable sin, but historically, wherever and whenever it becomes prevalent, a society is simultaneously deteriorating, spiritually and socially. Rampant sexual perversion preceded the overthrow of Sodom, Canaan, Phoenicia, and Rome. However, God is patient, not wanting any to perish. He gives ample opportunity for confession and repentance, and expects His children to sincerely love sinners, even while hating the sin.**
- 7) What was the significance of Lot's wife "looking back" (verse 26)? **God judged Lot's wife for having looked back, and therefore, she must have sinned. It seems that Lot's wife looked back with longing to return, or at the least, regretted having to leave. Perhaps she had grown quite comfortable in Sodom (it was her home). Whether or not she was *involved* in the sin of Sodom, she may have secretly loved this city.**
- 8) Are there sins in your past (or present) you secretly relive (relish the memory of)? If so, will you confess this to the Lord now and ask Him to keep you from looking back? (You will not be asked to share about this in class unless you volunteer to do so.) **Very personal sharing (Discussion leader: please respect the promise not to ask anyone by name to share his or her answer. Ask only for volunteers.)**

Read Genesis 19:1-29.

- 9) Compare verse 14 with Genesis 13:12-13 and 2 Peter 2:7-8. Considering Lot's character, explain why Lot's sons-in-law did not take him seriously. **Even though the 2 Peter verses say Lot was righteous and tormented in his soul by the sin of the Sodomites, apparently his testimony was so weak that his sons-in-law didn't even believe him when he told them the Lord was about to destroy the place. It seems Lot was a man with a divided heart rather than whole hearted. He put himself and his family in a vulnerable position by living in Sodom and associating with its people. This compromised his testimony. He may have despised the Sodomites' ways, yet he still tolerated their sins.**
- 10) a) Skim the following passages and name the occasions when God chose to completely annihilate a people group:
  - Genesis 6:11-13 and 7:21-24: **The Flood**
  - Genesis 18:20-21 and 19:24-25: **The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah**
  - Genesis 15:12-16 (the Amorites is a collective name for Canaanite peoples) together with Deuteronomy 7:1-2 and Joshua 11:12-15: **The annihilation of the Canaanites (Amorites)**
- b) According to the verses, what is the common reason that God brought judgment in each instance? **All of the events describe an annihilation that occurred as a judgment by God when sin had "reached its full measure" (Genesis 15:16; 18:20).**
- 11) To what future event does the New Testament compare the Flood in Noah's day and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? See Luke 17:20-35, 2 Peter 2:5-6, Jude 1:7 and Revelation 20:11-15. **The New Testament compares these events to the Second Coming of Christ and the Final Judgment (sometimes called the "Great White Throne Judgment"). Each happened as the future judgment will happen, suddenly and unexpectedly, resulting from God's wrath and judgment on sin.**
- 12) Apparently, not even ten righteous individuals were found in Sodom, or God wouldn't have destroyed it (Genesis 18:32). See 2 Peter 3:9 and record what you have learned about God's character from this lesson. **God is patient, not wanting anyone to perish. He delays judgment, waiting patiently for people to repent. But His holiness demands that eventually, judgment is served. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). God has, in the past, and will again in the future, bring mass judgment on mankind for sin. However, God is fair. Based on Abraham's conversation with God in Genesis 18:23-32, God's deliverance of Lot, and many other Bible passages, we know that God ultimately evaluates each person *individually* and He rescues the righteous.**

Read Genesis 19:1-38.

- 13) How were Lot's daughters' actions a reflection of the culture from which they came? **Lot's daughters determined to continue their father's line by deception and perversion. This is not surprising considering they were raised in or near Sodom. They had previously been betrothed to Sodomites.**
- 14) List all the consequences given in chapter 19 of Lot's decision to live near Sodom. **Lot's decision to move near to (or in) Sodom cost him dearly in the end. His testimony was apparently destroyed because he had no influence over those in the town or even over his own sons-in-law. He lost his wife, and his daughters lost their husbands. Finally, Lot's sons were born to him in perversion and deception by his own daughters.**
- 15) In light of all you have learned about Lot, how could you improve the effectiveness of your influence in your family, neighborhood, or workplace? Be as specific as possible. **Personal sharing**