

Genesis

Chapter 19



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Theme: The angels visit Lot; destruction of the Cities of the Plain.

The preceding chapter was a picture of blessed Christian fellowship with God. But now the picture changes: We leave Hebron on the plains of Mamre where Abraham dwells and we go to the city of Sodom where Lot dwells. In this chapter Lot leaves Sodom with his wife and two daughters, and Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed. Lot's wife turns to a pillar of salt, and then we have Lot's awful sin with his two daughters.

In chapter 19 we have a picture of that which is "the blasted life." Don't forget as we go through this chapter that this man Lot happens to be a righteous man. It is hard to believe that; if we had only this record in Genesis, we may not believe it. But Simon Peter, in his epistle, says of Lot, "... that righteous man ... vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (2 Pet. 2:8). Lot lived in Sodom, but he never was happy there. It was a tragic day for him when he moved to Sodom, because he lost his family—he lost all of them if you look at the total picture. There are many today who may be a saved, but due to their life style or where they live, they lose their family, their influence, and their testimony.

Sodom and Gomorrah

The "cities of the plain" along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea have not been positively located. Their association with Zoar (Zoara on the sixth-century A.D. Madaba map) and the bitumen pits "in the Valley of Siddim" (Genesis 14:10) both point to the southern end of the Dead Sea. Arguments for their identification with the north end are based on the distance to travel from Hebron (eighteen miles versus forty miles to the southern location) and the mention of the "plain of the Jordan" in Genesis 13:10-12. Cities located in this arid region survived and prospered on the salt, bitumen and potash deposits around the Dead Sea and as trading centers for caravans traveling the road north and south. There are five sites of Early Bronze Age cities on the southeast plain of the Dead Sea, demonstrating that fairly large populations once existed here (occupied from 3300 to 2100 B.C.): Bab-edh Dhra` (Sodom?), Safi (Zoar), Numeira (Gomorrah?), Feifa and Khanazir. Only Bab-edh Dhra and Numeira have been excavated, and the destruction of these cities has been set by archaeologists at about 2350 B.C., too early for Abraham (though chronological reckoning of this period is difficult).

Torah class: We see that long before Moses and the Law of Mt. Sinai, god is applying some universal standard to all human behavior. The Hebrews refer to this standard as the 7 Noachide Laws. And in this chapter, we see that Sodom has crossed over a line of wickedness, that violates that standard, and that God will no longer tolerate it. ¹

¹ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

Sodom and Gomorrah (Illumina Encyclopedia)

Sodom and Gomorrah are two cities in the Bible associated with evil. They were cities of the plain or valley (Genesis 13:12). There were five cities located in the valley of Siddim (i.e., the Salt Sea). Of these, Sodom is mentioned most frequently in Genesis-thirty-six times in all. Sodom became known in as the supreme example of a wicked city. Its destruction (19:24) was used as a warning of God's judgment in other biblical writings (Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 1:9-10; Jeremiah 23:14; Jeremiah 49:18; Lamentations 4:6; Amos 4:11; Zephaniah 2:9). The story of Sodom's destruction found its place also in the New Testament (Matthew 10:15; Luke 10:12; 17:29; Romans 9:29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 1:7; Revelation 11:8).

The primary story of these two cities occurs in Genesis 18 and 19. The biblical interest in the city begins in chapter 13. Lot, Abraham's nephew, decided to settle in the Jordan Valley, in the vicinity of Sodom. The people were already known as notorious sinners. One of Sodom's most notable sins was sexual perversion, especially homosexuality. One time Lot offered his virgin daughters to the men of Sodom to turn their attention away from his heavenly visitors. This is an indication of the demoralizing influence of the city. Four rulers from the East descended on the region of Sodom and Gomorrah sometime after Lot settled there and controlled the area. They returned fourteen years later to stop a rebellion (Genesis 14:1-5). Among their captives was Lot, who was later rescued by Abraham. The evil of Sodom and Gomorrah was so great the Lord determined to destroy the cities. Abraham pleaded for mercy for them if ten righteous men could be found (18:20-33). The two heavenly visitors who went from Abraham to Sodom found Lot sitting in the gate of Sodom (19). They revealed God's intentions to him, and they persuaded Lot, his wife, and two daughters to flee the city. Then the Lord rained brimstone (related to sulfur) and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah. The next morning Abraham saw the smoke from the destroyed cities rising like the smoke of a furnace.

Torah Class: The outpouring of God's wrath is when God SENDS a catastrophe. It is unique. Its scope is so far beyond what nature could normally do, and it occurs at a time that God ordains. The Flood is one example. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is another. At the end of the world, the earth's population will see phenomenon never before seen by man; and the Bible clearly states God is sending it as a judgment.

Further, an outpouring of God's wrath is preceded by ample warning. It's not sudden and unannounced. And, when it is God's destructive wrath, the good are divided away from the wicked. Again, the Flood and Sodom and Gomorrah are our examples. And, as we read Revelation, we see the same pattern; those who are in Christ, will be protected as the wicked are singled out for destruction.

This is a pattern of God's behavior that we can count on; yet, there was another pattern that baffled the prophets and the sages. Why, they often asked, does God allow the wicked to prosper? And, the answer, though mysterious in most ways, has something to do with their evil actions either being part of a stage in God's plan being fulfilled by means of that wicked activity, or some benefit coming to His people by means of the Wicked's actions (though it is most certainly not the intention of the wicked for God's

people to benefit). So, even though Yahweh allows bad things to happen to good people, we can also be certain that God is not going to pour out His wrath on the wicked, and let His people also die, in a supernatural destruction; because that is simply not what God does; it is not within His character. The purpose of the Rapture is to whisk His chosen away to safety.²

Jewish Study Bible: The contrast between Abraham and Lot continues. Whereas Abraham sees the Lord, Lot sees only His two angelic attendants. Whereas Abraham runs to greet his visitors Lot only rises. Whereas Abraham offers a sumptuous feast, Lot offers unleavened bread.³

Chumash: Toras Menachem; Lot's Salvation:

Talmud: maintains that Lot was a tzadik (righteous man). Therefore, he was saved by the angel Micha'el who helps the souls of the righteous.

Midrash: on the other hand, maintains that Lot was a rasha (wicked person). Therefore, he was saved by Rafa'el who is the angel that heals the sick, because helping a wicked person to repent is a form of spiritual healing.⁴

Genesis 19:1

And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

[two angels] These are probably the two referred to in Genesis 18:22.

Torah Class: So, what can we learn about Yahweh and/or about angels from this event? For one thing, angels have the ability to take on physical dimension. In fact, if we can point to one concrete thing we can know about angels from Scripture, it is that USUALLY they take on human form when they interact with humans. Generally speaking, the humans in the Bible story don't realize at first that these "men" they're seeing and talking to aren't really men at all, but rather are angels. Often we will see that once the humans realize that these "men" are angels, fear sets in, and the humans fall on their faces in worship or literally feint from fright. which is apparently the main reason the angels take on human form in the first place. That is, so they don't, quite literally, scare humans to the point of utter disorientation or even death.⁵

² Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

³ Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford University Press

⁴ Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

⁵ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

[Lot sat in the gate] In ancient cities the gate area functioned as a public square. As the gate was also the place of judgment, he may have been sitting there as magistrate to hear and determine disputes. Lot is a leader of the community; a judge, for he “was sitting in the gateway of the city” (v. 1; cf. v. 9). 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). This man Lot not only moved to Sodom, but he also got involved in politics there.

Boaz went to the gate to conduct his official and legal business.

(Ruth 4:1) *Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.*

Official and legal business typically occurred at the **gate** of a city, so it was natural for Boaz to speak with the other **close relative** there in the presence of the elders of the community. During the time of the kings, a ruler might come to the city gate to proclaim a public judgment.

While his conduct will shock you, he was deemed “a righteous man” (2 Peter 2:7-8)!

(2 Pet. 2:6-9) ⁶*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;*
⁷*And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: ⁸(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)*
⁹*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:*

[bowed himself] One way to show respect to superiors and to demonstrate peaceful intentions was to bow to the ground. Some Egyptian texts from El Amarna (fourteenth century B.C.) exaggerate this gesture by multiplying it seven times.

Genesis 19:2

And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

When a host offered a guest the opportunity to spend the night, he was also accepting responsibility for the safety and well-being of his guest. The offer generally extended for a total of three days.

[we will abide in the street all night] In many warm climates it was customary to sleep in the open air.

Nachmanides; “Behold now my Lords” Rashi comments: “Behold now you are my lords since you have passed by me” The correct interpretation is that it is an expression of pleadings: “My lords, behold now your servant's house; turn aside, I pray you, to me”. The word *suru* (turn aside) is as in the expressions: Turn aside (*surah*'), sit down here; Turn in (*surah*'), my lord, turn in to me; fear not.⁶

Torah Class: In Chapter 19, verse 1, it says Lot fell on his face before these two angels. Does this mean Lot knew they were angels? I don't think so. The Oriental world at that time treated visitors and guests with utmost honor. Bowing low was a customary greeting to a visitor, as was inviting them into your home to stay. The Angels saying “no” to Lot's offer, they'd stay in the square, that is, the area near the front gate, was also a typical Oriental response to the INITIAL offer of hospitality.....its like us saying “oh, no, that's just too much trouble for you”. Then, the expected response from the host was an insistence that they stay..... and, of course, the visitors did. This cordial Middle Eastern kabuki dance between host and guest has stayed generally unchanged right up through today.

As we move through Torah, we'll find several mentions of someone “sitting in the gate”, which is where we find Lot when the Angles arrive. First, understand that the gate was the way into a walled city. If a city had a wall that meant the city was substantial in size and population. Second, a gate typically had a tower and some guardrooms, and required a person entering to walk through a couple of rooms, making some quick turns, to get from the outside to the inside; that way, it was harder for group of bandits or an army to suddenly rush through the gateway into the city. Third, the gate area, in that era, doubled as the “town square”. It was a general meeting place, where official business occurred. Trials might even occur there. The idea was that whatever business was occurring was public, and had witnesses.⁷

Chrysostom; Lot welcomes the visitors: “on seeing them” the text says, note, “he rose to meet them and prostrated himself on the ground.” He gave thanks to God for being found worthy to welcome the visitors. Notice his virtue of soul: he considered it a great kindness on God's part to encounter these men and by welcoming them to fulfill his

⁶ Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

⁷ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

private longing. Now don't tell me they were angels; remember, rather, that this good man did not realize that yet but behaved as though receiving unknown travelers. "He said, Lo sirs, break off your journey at your servant's house. Test and bathe your feet; then rise early and resume your journey." These words are sufficient to reveal the virtue residing in the good man's soul. How could you help being amazed at his exceeding humility and the fervor with which he displayed his hospitality? "Lo, sirs," he said, "break off your journey at your servant's house." He addresses them as "sirs" and calls himself their servant. Let us listen precisely, dearly beloved, to these words and learn how we too can do likewise. This man of good name and reputation, enjoying great prosperity, a householder, addresses as master these travelers, these strangers, unknown, unprepossessing wayfarers, no connections of his, and says, "Break off your journey at your servant's house and rest." You see evening has fallen, he says; accede to my wish and assuage the day's hardship by resting in the home of your servant. I mean, surely I'm not offering you anything wonderful? "Bathe your feet" wearied with traveling, "and rise early and resume your journey." So do me this favor, and don't refuse my entreaty.⁸

Genesis 19:3

And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned into him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

[he pressed upon them greatly] Lot knew that it would not be safe for them to stay in the street in the city of Sodom.

[he made them a feast] Now these men have another feast. They had a feast with Abraham; they now have a feast with Lot.

[unleavened bread] bread without yeast. As in the case of the unleavened bread eaten on Passover prior to the exodus (Exodus 12) from Egypt, Lot's "bread without yeast" was made quickly. It was evening when his guests arrived, and he did not have time to let his bread rise before baking it.

Torah Class: I'd like you to notice in Verse 3 that Lot prepared his guests a meal with Matzah, which is the Hebrew word for unleavened bread.....a flat bread, make without yeast. This is done when meal preparation has to be hurried.....no time is available for the bread to rise. Why is this pointed out here? Because we soon find out they ARE in a hurried situation, as they are about to flee. We will see similar scenes in a number of places in the OT, but perhaps the most famous is the Exodus from Egypt, where God instructed the Israelites to eat a final meal of unleavened bread so they could get ought'a Dodge FAST! This preparation of unleavened bread is another of the many "patterns" and "types" that we find throughout the Scriptures.⁹

⁸ Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

⁹ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

Genesis 19:4

But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

Note the extent of homosexuality: “all the people from every quarter.” It wasn’t simply the sin itself: it was the condoning and the extent of it... Sodom’s sin was more than homosexuality it was the condoning and pervasiveness of it.

Behavior of men at Sodom. The angels’ visit to Sodom was to determine if there were ten righteous men there. The legal formula in Genesis 19:4 makes it clear that probably all of the men of the city confronted Lot about his guests. In addition to the fact that homosexuality was considered a capital offense, their refusal to listen to reason and their unanimous insistence on violence as they rushed toward his house confirmed the fate of the city.

[quarter] In Eastern cities there were different quarters where people lived separated by nation, religion, or occupation (Isaiah 47:15; Isaiah 56:11; Jeremiah 37:21).

Genesis 19:5

And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

[Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night?] Question 32. Next question is in Genesis 19:12.

[know] *yada`*, (H3045), *yaw-dah'*; a primitive root; to *know* (properly to ascertain by *seeing*); used in a great variety of senses, figurative, literal, euphemism and inference (including *observation, care, recognition*; and causative *instruction, designation, punishment*, etc.) [as follow] :- acknowledge, acquaintance (-ted with), advise, answer, appoint, assuredly, be aware, [un-] awares, can [-not], certainly, for a certainty, comprehend, consider, × could they, cunning, declare, be diligent, (can, cause to) discern, discover, endued with, familiar friend, famous, feel, can have, be [ig-] norant, instruct, kinsfolk, kinsman, (cause to, let, make) know, (come to give, have, take) knowledge, have [knowledge], (be, make, make to be, make self) known, + be learned, + lie by man, mark, perceive, privy to, × prognosticator, regard, have respect, skilful, shew, can (man of) skill, be sure, of a surety, teach, (can) tell, understand, have [understanding], × will be, wist, wit, wot.

[that we may know them] This is a sickening scene, which reveals the degradation of this city—the city of Sodom. The name that has been put on this sin from that day to this is *sodomy*. Sodomy was forbidden (Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; Deut. 23:17; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:10; cp. Isaiah 1:9; Isaiah 3:9; Judges 19:22; Judges 20:13; Romans 1:18-32).

McGee: This is a sickening scene which reveals the degradation of this city—the city of Sodom. The name that has been put on this sin from that day to this is *sodomy*. Apparently there was no attempt made in the city of Sodom to have a church for this crowd and to tell them that they were all right in spite of the fact that they practiced this thing. May I say to you that the Word of God is specific on this, and you cannot tone it down. Sodomy is an awful sin.

When this man Lot had gone down into the city of Sodom, he did not realize what kind of city it was—I'm sure of that. He got down there and found out that perversion was the order of the day, and he brought up his children, his sons and his daughters, in that atmosphere. When he earlier had pitched his tent toward Sodom, he had looked down there and had seen the lovely streets and boulevards and parks and public buildings. And he had seen the folk as they were on the outside, but he had not seen what they really were. The sin of this city is so great that God is now going to judge it. God is going to destroy the city.

Let's draw a sharp line here. There is a new attitude toward sin today. There is a gray area where sin is not really as black as we once thought it was. The church has compromised until it is pitiful. In Southern California we have a church made up of those who are homosexuals, and, lo and behold, they all admit that the pastor of the church is one also! May I say to you, the lesson of Sodom and Gomorrah is a lesson for this generation. God is *not* accepting this kind of church.

The idea today seems to be that you can become a child of God and continue on in sin. God says that is impossible—you cannot do that, and this city of Sodom is an example of that fact. Paul asks the question: “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” And the answer is “God forbid,” or, Let it not be (see Rom. 6:1–2). The idea that you can be a Christian and go on in sin is a tremendous mistake, especially to make light of it, as I judge is being done in this particular case.

This is what they were doing in Sodom and Gomorrah—and God destroyed these cities. Don't say that we have a primitive view of God in Genesis but that we have a better one today. Don't argue that, after all, Jesus received sinners. He sure did, but when He got through with them, He had changed them. The harlot who came to Him was no longer in that business. When she came to God, she changed. That is the thing that happened to other sinners. A publican came to Him, and he left the seat of customs. He gave up that which was crooked when he came to the Lord. If you have come to Christ, *you* will be changed. Many people write and try to explain to me that we are living in a new day and I need to wake up. My friend, we are living in a new day, but it just happens to be Sodom and Gomorrah all over again.¹⁰

Genesis 19:6

And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

Lot is outside now and going to try to reason with the men of Sodom. Lot knows that the guests are under his protection. Lot however goes far beyond reason.

¹⁰McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:81). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Genesis 19:7

And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

Genesis 19:8

Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

[under the shadow of my roof] When a man entertained a guest in that day, he was responsible for him. Lot was willing to make this kind of sacrifice to protect his guests!

[do ye to them as is good in your eyes] He was willing to sacrifice his daughters' to fend off the vice of Sodomite men. They apparently were betrothed, but not wed yet. His daughters had no qualms against having sex with their drunk and naked father (vv. 30-35).

Lot's offer of his daughters. When Lot offers his virgin daughters to the men of Sodom as a substitute for his guests, he is playing the consummate host. He is willing to sacrifice his most precious possessions to uphold his honor by protecting his guests. He was saved from making this sacrifice by the refusal of the mob and the actions of the angels.

Notice also that the men of Sodom regarded the angels as (hansom) "*men.*"

Nachmanides; "Let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you" From the praise of this man Lot we have come to his disgrace: he made every effort on behalf of his guests in order to save them because they came under the shadow of his roof, but he is ready to appease the men of the city by abandoning his daughters to prostitution! This bespeaks nothing but an evil heart for it shows that the matter of prostitution of women was not repugnant to him, and that in his opinion he would not be doing such great injustice to his daughters. It is for this reason that our Rabbis have said, "It is the custom of the world that a man fights to the death for the honor of his daughters and his wife, to slay or to be slain, but this man hands over his daughters for dishonor. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to him, "It is for yourself that you keep them."

Now Lot was fearful [for the welfare of the angels] as he thought that they were men, but when they smote the men of the city with blindness and they said to him, For we will destroy this place ... and the Eternal hath sent us, then he recognized them and believed in doing whatever they commanded him.¹¹

Torah Class: Next we see the event that so many of us first learned of back in children's Sunday School: the men of Sodom wanted to harm Lot's two guests, who were actually Angels, and Lot tried to stop them. What we probably DIDN'T hear in children's Sunday School was that the incredibly perverted and wicked men of Sodom wanted to commit unspeakable sexual acts on these men, and, that Lot offered these evil men his

¹¹ Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

own daughters if they'd leave the 2 angels alone! If you're anything like me, that is unimaginable that I'd offer my own daughters up for rape, rather than anything happen to these two strangers. Well, once again we run into a completely typical cultural situation for that time. It was considered the duty of a family to care for their guests ABOVE themselves. They were to give up their own lives to protect their guests, if necessary. And, that's what's happening here.

But, we also see something else: we get an example of the horrendous wickedness of Sodom.....sufficient wickedness that Yahweh has determined to eradicate the place and the people. And, it is a sexually immoral wickedness, which as we find in Leviticus, ranks as the worst of the worst human sins before God. And, the exhibited sin here revolves around homosexuality. These men lusted after other men to the point that when Lot offered his virgin daughters, they declined.

I cannot just let this pass without saying that despite most of the world's highest cultures now taking all social stigma out of homosexuality, and, as Canada just did, making the marriage between two people of the same sex legal, and in doing so glorifying sexual perversion, we see Yahweh's opinion of it here in Genesis 19; He destroyed all involved with it. Notice that it doesn't say that the people of Sodom committed idolatry, nor that they cheated one another, nor that they practiced injustice; the ONLY sin mentioned was homosexuality. Now, no doubt, these other things occurred; but that is not what was recorded for us to read almost 4000 years later.

We must fight with every means we have to prevent our nation from going in this direction. That many of us in this room have children or grandchildren who are gay is a certainty. That we still love them is a certainty. That they are committing a sin of the highest order is a certainty. That they are wrong is a certainty. That we have Christian Churches who now ordain homosexuals is perhaps even more disturbing. Will we ever rid our American society of this immorality? Not likely. But, following Yahweh is not about taking polls, and majority rules, and following the crowd. Standing against such things is our duty, no matter how unpopular it may be.

What happens next is that it turns out these two men (angels), who Lot thinks he is protecting, are actually protecting Lot. And, they do so by first supernaturally blinding the men who are trying to batter down the door to get to them, and then by insisting that Lot and his family leave quickly before the destruction begins.¹²

Genesis 19:9

And they said, Stand back. And they said *again*, This one *fellow* came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door.

[will deal worse with thee] They intended to sodomize Lot if they couldn't have the angels. This is a very rough scene.

¹² Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

Nachmanides; “And they pressed hard (*vayiftzeru*) upon the man, even Lot.”

I have found this word *vayiftzery* only in connection with words of pleading. If so, we will explain its usage here as follows: the men of Sodom begged him [Lot] exceedingly to open the door for them, and when he refused to do so, they approached in order to break it. It may be that he stood in front of the door, not letting them come near him, and they begged him to turn aside as they did not want to harm him. This is the meaning of their saying, Stand back, meaning “stand in another place.”¹³

Anonymous; Habitual injustice: Their habitual injustice to human beings eventually led the Sodomites to violence against angels ... Bad morals are therefore a harmful and destructive thing, even if not immediately.¹⁴

Genesis 19:10

But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

[**put forth their hand**] That angels are spirits is clear from Psalm 104:4 and Hebrews 1:13-14; that they have spirit bodies is clear from this record which shows them physically laying hold of human bodies with their hands. God is also a Spirit with a spirit body.

Genesis 19:11

And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

Those who were morally blind were now stricken with physical **blindness** by the angelic guests (see a similar angelic blight in 2 Kin. 6:18). Only the confusion and panic of these wicked men spared Lot and his family from vicious assault.

Nine Cases of Blindness

1. The Sodomites (Genesis 19:11)
2. Isaac (Genesis 27:1)
3. Jacob (Genesis 48:10)
4. Samson (Judges 16:21)
5. Eli (1 Samuel 4:15)
6. Ahijah (1 Kings 14:4)
7. Syrians (2 Kings 6:18)
8. Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:7)
9. Elymas (Acts 13:11)

¹³ Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

¹⁴ Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

Salvian the Presbyter: “Those who Neglect the Gospels:

However, how do we account for the fact that the Savior himself has brought to mind that all who spurned the gospel were worse: Finally to Capernaum he said, “If in Sodom had been wrought the miracles that had been wrought in you, perhaps it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you.” If he says the people of Sodom are less worthy of damnation than all those who neglect the Gospels, then it is most certainly reasonable that we, who neglect the Gospels in most things, should have all the more fear. This is especially so because we are unwilling to be content with sins to which we already long accustomed and, as it were, on daily familiarity.¹⁵

Genesis 19:12

And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place:

[Hast thou here any besides] Question 33. Next question is in Genesis 19:20. This verse may reveal that the knowledge of angels is limited, for if they had infinite knowledge they would have known that Lot did not have sons.

There is no record of Lot having sons, as suggested by the angel. If so, they chose to remain in Sodom, indicating that they were homosexuals as were all the other men in the city. That his sons-in-law chose to remain is clear (Genesis 19:14). It seems that they had not yet married his two daughters but were only engaged, because Genesis 19:8 says the daughters had not "known (had sexual relations with) man." If the sons-in-law had entered into the final marriage contract, then they perhaps lived with Lot's daughters in name only. This is done among homosexuals, as Romans 1:27 says, "the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men ..." That Lot had no sons and only two daughters is plainly indicated in Genesis 19:30-31 where one is called "the firstborn" and the other "the younger" (cf. Genesis 29:26). The terms "his two daughters" (Genesis 19:30) and "both the daughters of Lot" (Genesis 19:36) also emphasize this.

Genesis 19:13

For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

[because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD] It is found to be as wicked as reported by our scouts (Genesis 18:21).

¹⁵ Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press (Matt 11:23-24)

Genesis 19:14

And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

[mocked] (*jested*); *tsachaq*, (H6711), *tsaw-khak'*; a primitive root; to laugh outright (in merriment or scorn); by implication to sport :- laugh, mock, play, make sport. (Gen 21:9; 39:17)

The Angels virtually force the others to safety... Lot did not win anybody for the Lord in this city.

[But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.] They responded to Lot's warning much the same way the scoffers of 2 Peter 3:3-4 are predicted to receive teaching about Christ's coming in the last days

Lot's *sons-in-law*, having rejected his warning, apparently perished (cf. v. 16). They thought Lot was joking, for he had lost his moral leadership even within his family.

Torah Class: In verses 13 and 14, where my Complete Jewish Bible reads "Adonai", and yours likely reads "Lord", the actual original Hebrew was Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh.....Y-H-W-H, "Yahweh". And, who is Yahweh? The Lord God Almighty is being referred to here, by his actual personal name, when the 2 angels explain that YAHWEH sent them, and YAHWEH has instructed them to destroy the city. A pre-incarnate Jesus didn't instruct them; the Holy Spirit did not instruct them; God the Father, Yahweh, who gentile Christians call Jehovah, instructed them.

So verse 13 actually reads, ".....**Yahweh** has become aware of the great outcry against them, and Yahweh has sent us to destroy it". Let me be very clear, since it is amazing what some people seem to think I mean by this: the word YAHWEH....the Hebrew letters Yud-heh-vav-heh.....are actually, literally there. This is not speculation, this is not doctrine or tradition, this is not even in some ancient Hebrew manuscripts and NOT in others; the word Yahweh is actually, literally there in ALL original Hebrew manuscripts where our Bibles say Lord or God in the O.T.¹⁶

McGee: Lot is in a very bad situation. He had spent years down in the city of Sodom. He had learned to tolerate this sort of thing, although he calls it wickedness. He had seen his sons and daughters grow up, and they apparently had married among people with those ethical standards. When the time came that Lot got this word from the Lord to leave the city, he went to his sons-in-law and said, "Let's get out of here. God is going to destroy this city." They laughed at him. They ridiculed him. I suppose they knew that the week before Lot had invested a little money in real estate there. He had lived so long as one of them, without any real difference, that they took his warning as a big joke. This man was out of the will of God in this place, and he had no witness for God. He did not win anybody for the Lord in this city. The same principle is true today: when you go down to

¹⁶ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

their level, my friend, you do not win them. I think that that is being clearly demonstrated in this hour.

Frankly, I would agree with Abraham that this man Lot wasn't saved, but remember what Peter said: "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)" (2 Pet. 2:6–8). I tell you, Lot never enjoyed it down there in Sodom. Now that he is going to leave the city, he cannot get anyone to leave with him except his wife and two single daughters.¹⁷

Genesis 19:15

And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

Eight Commands of the Angels

1. Arise (Genesis 19:15).
2. Take your wife and daughters (Genesis 19:15).
3. Escape for your life (Genesis 19:17).
4. Do not look behind you (Genesis 19:17).
5. Do not stay in the plain (Genesis 19:17).
6. Escape to the mountain (Genesis 19:17).
7. Make haste (Genesis 19:22).
8. Escape (Genesis 19:22).

Genesis 19:16

And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

[he lingered] A conflict between faith and sight: Lot didn't refuse to obey, yet he lingered. He was brought forcibly out and warned to escape to the mountain, yet he asked for a city of refuge in the plains. His prayer was heard and the city spared. Formerly Bela (Genesis 14:2,8), its name was changed to Zoar, meaning little, to commemorate his plea for mercy (Genesis 19:22). Lot chose the plain and went into Sodom a prosperous man—with herdsmen, cattle and riches. He left empty-handed.

God's mercy overcame Lot's procrastination.

¹⁷McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:82). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Genesis 19:17

And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

Genesis 19:18

And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:

Torah Class: In V18, Lot responds to the angels who were telling him to leave, by saying “Please, no my lord”. Now, did Lot think he was talking to God, Yahweh, or now aware that these men were not men, to the angels? The word, in this verse, used for “lord” is Adonai. And, as I’ve mentioned before, Adonai can be used to refer to God, or it can simply mean a generic lord or master. a lord or master of any sort, human or spiritual. Here, the actual original text is “Please, no Adonai”. Within the context, it is not referring to God, its referring to the generic form of Adonai; Lot was responding to the angels; calling them Adonai, lords, masters; it was just a way of speaking that was a sign of respect and courtesy, and in this case recognizing their power and authority.

I wanted to point this out, not because the meaning in our bibles is necessarily wrong, but because when we understand the expanded meaning that Hebrew gives us, we understand what is going on so much more clearly. We can know more precisely which manifestation of God, now, that is speaking in Chapter 19. Some of you may be thinking, is this really important? Yes, it is. It is these bits and pieces that we can put together so as to understand the Scriptures more ACCURATELY. And, remember, at least half of the NT is OT quotes, and the book of Revelation is primarily a compiling of the OT prophecies and a putting of them into a chronological order. So, if we really want to understand what is happening in the NT, we need to get the OT right, first.

Anyway, Lot leaves, takes his wife and two unmarried daughters; but these so-called “sons-in-law” won’t go. They simply don’t believe what the angels said. They didn’t survive their skepticism, and neither did Lot’s wife. These so-called “sons-in-law” are a bit of mystery, mainly because the Hebrew is not clear here. That term could mean men to whom Lot’s two daughters were engaged, or more than likely it was that these were husbands to OTHER daughters of Lot. In either case, they would have been men of Sodom. . . pagans. Here’s a little clue when reading the Bible: if you see only a couple of children mentioned, it is probable that the couple had OTHER children as well. . . .there just was not reason to speak of them. In the Biblical era, for someone to only have 2 or 3 children would have indicated either the deaths of other of their children, or that they were VERY young and just starting a family, or that there was something medically wrong with either the husband or wife. A minimum of 5 or 6 children would have been the norm. And, due to disease and other hazards, some of a couples children dying at young ages was usual and expected. So, you can draw your own conclusions about whether Lot had more children or not.

Apparently Lot still didn’t recognize the nature of the danger or the imminence of what was about to occur. The Angels told Lot to hurry up and leave, but he just didn’t get it. He apparently was taking his time, packing up and making sure he didn’t forget anything

of importance. One of the Angels intervened and literally grabbed him by his hand, then grabbed his daughters' hands, and dragged them outside the city walls.

Here we should remember a type that is being established: recall that upon the Angels arrival...only a few hours earlier.... Lot made Matzah, unleavened bread, for them to eat. And, now, he has to hurry to leave. You can bet, though it's not stated, that the food that he took with him was that unleavened bread that had been made the evening before the morning he was about to flee. And, of course, that type is carried forward several centuries later to the making of unleavened bread before Israel hurriedly left Egypt.¹⁸

Genesis 19:19

Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

[**I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die**] After Zoar was spared Lot became afraid to dwell there, so he finally escaped to the mountain. The destruction of the other cities made him fearful that the same would happen to Zoar (Genesis 19:30).

Genesis 19:20

Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (*is it not a little one?*) and my soul shall live.

[**is it not a little one?**] Question 34 The next question is in Genesis 20:4.

Genesis 19:21

And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

Zoar is going to be spared because Lot is going to go there.

Genesis 19:22

Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

This is a key verse. It may allude to a pretribulation rapture. That the judgment of God will not take place until the righteous are removed.

¹⁸ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

Cyril of Alexandria: God Accommodates Weakness: Great is the loving kindness of God. He who is all-powerful says, “I can do nothing until you arrive there.” He accommodates even the weakness of his servant and tolerates his delay.¹⁹

Genesis 19:23

The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

Lot wrung a concession out of the angels. He wanted to go to the small town of Zoar, which means “a little one” (vv. 18-22). (Before that it was known as Bela, 14:2.)

Torah Class: The Angels instruct Lot to flee to the safety of the nearby hills; but the ever-reticent Lot says, no, I’d rather go to a city. Lot liked his comforts. Recall that when he and Abraham parted ways, and Abraham gave Lot the choice of what part of the land he preferred for himself and his flocks, he chose Sodom. And, the next thing we see is Lot living in a city. Lot obviously didn’t have a taste for the life of a nomad, or a shepherd. He wanted to reside in a more refined city atmosphere and the comfort and security and easier life that it afforded him. That he was living in Sodom makes it clear he had turned his back on his heritage and way of life in favor of the way of the pagans. In many ways, Lot was a shadow of the tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim-Israel who turned their backs on their own heritage, in favor of taking on the lifestyle of their gentile neighbors.

Keep in mind, though, that nowhere do we see Lot renouncing his faith in the God of Israel; Lot was not a bad man. It’s just that Lot was weak, and prone to succumbing to the everyday temptations of the world. Lot’s life is a very good illustration of what we today refer to as “a carnal Christian”. As weak as was Lot’s faith, and as apparently unusable Lot was for God’s good purposes, God still saved him for Lot was, after all, one of His. But, what a sad epitaph and summary we get of Lot’s existence on earth.

Lot asks to be sent to a small, nearby city. In fact the city is so small, that its name is Tzo’ar, which in Hebrew, MEANS small. Actually, what we’re witnessing here is a name change; the city was originally known as Bela...now it is Tzoar. Lot and his family arrive there, and quickly the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are obliterated. The smoke was so thick, and it rose so high, that Abraham, standing on a hill in far off Hebron, was able to see it. Then we find out exactly why God saved Lot: in V29, we’re told it was because Abraham had asked him to. It was because the righteous Abraham had pled for the life of Lot. Something we parents, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters need to keep in mind. The prayers of a righteous person, and if you’re saved you’re righteous before God, can lead to saving the unsaved, or even rescuing the saved but weak. I have no doubt that my father’s prayers are all that stood between me and the oblivion I deserved and was moving rapidly towards, many years ago. Perhaps the only thing that can deliver, or even sustain the life of our children or grandchildren, is our prayers. And, I have no

¹⁹ Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

doubt that Lot was oblivious that it was Abraham who had interceded for him and kept him from destruction.²⁰

Genesis 19:24

Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

[brimstone and fire] Burning sulfur. The scene is one of divine retribution. Brimstone appears here and elsewhere as an agent of purification and divine wrath upon the wicked (Psalm 11:6; Ezekiel 38:22). The natural deposits of bitumen and the sulfurous smell attached to some areas around the Dead Sea combine to provide a lasting memory of Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction. One can only speculate about the actual manner of this destruction, but perhaps the combustion of natural tars and sulfur deposits and the release of noxious gases during an earthquake are a part of the story (Deut. 29:23).

[Then the LORD] When Lot entered Zoar God destroyed the other cities of the plain. Zoar was spared in answer to Lot's prayer (Genesis 19:18-22). Abraham's intercession of Genesis 18:23-33 was no doubt the first reason God had for sparing the city; his prayer for the saving of at least ten persons was abundantly answered. Zoar continued for many centuries, not only because of prayer, but also because it wasn't as ripe for judgment as the other cities. See Deut. 34:3; Isaiah 15:5; Jeremiah 48:34.

[rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire] Deut. 29:23; Psalm 11:6; Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 49:18; Jeremiah 50:40; Ezekiel 16:48-49; Amos 4:11; Zeph. 2:9; Matthew 11:23; Luke 17:29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 1:6-7.

[from the LORD out of heaven] A clear example of more than one Jehovah. Lord here is Jehovah (H3068). One Jehovah on earth rained fire and brimstone from another Jehovah in heaven (Genesis 19:24). Many times the angel of (from) the Lord (Jehovah) is used; Scripture is clear that this angel is both Lord (Jehovah) and God (Genesis 16:7-11; Genesis 22:1-16; Exodus 14:19-31; Numbers 22:22-35; Judges 2:1-4; Judges 6:11-24; Judges 13:2-25; Zech. 1:9-19; Zech. 3:1-6; Zech. 12:8; etc; cp. Acts 7:30-38). One Jehovah literally sends another Jehovah as His messenger.

Genesis 19:25

And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

(Ezekiel 16:48-50) ⁴⁸*As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.* ⁴⁹*Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and*

²⁰ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.⁵⁰ And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

(Deuteronomy 29:17-29 ¹⁷*And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them:)* ¹⁸*Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;* ¹⁹*And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:* ²⁰*The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.* ²¹*And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law:* ²²*So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it;* ²³*And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:* ²⁴*Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?* ²⁵*Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt:* ²⁶*For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them:* ²⁷*And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book:* ²⁸*And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.* ²⁹*The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

Genesis 19:26

But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

[looked back] She willfully disobeyed God's Word, showing to what extent she had become attached to the world (Genesis 19:17; Luke 17:32; cp. Proverbs 14:14; Hebrews 10:38).

With burning sulfur the Lord overthrew the wicked cities and the entire plain (vv. 24-25). Some have suggested that deposits of sulfur erupted from the earth (cf. the “tar pits,” 14:10), and then showered down out of the heavens in flames of fire (cf. Lk 17:29). Lot’s wife gazed back intently and was changed into a pillar of salt, a monument to her disobedience; covered and encrusted with deposits from the raining brimstone. Jesus admonishes us to “remember Lot’s wife” (Lk 17:32).

(Luke 17:29-32) But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot’s wife.

Jesus refers to all of this regarding His Second Coming...[Incidentally, Babylon is destined to meet a similar fate: Is 13:19 and Jer 50:40.]

(Matt 11:23-24) And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Jesus also said that if the miracles He did in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, the Sodomites would have repented (Mt 11:23). As it is, “it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment” than for the cities of Galilee (Mt 11:24). How much more culpable are we! God judges according to knowledge, “To whom much is given, much will be required.” Lk 12:48. God’s withholding from unbelievers is an act of mercy!

McGee: I think this verse has been greatly misunderstood. Why in the world did Mrs. Lot turn and look back? I think that the reason is twofold. First of all, she turned and looked back because she did not want to leave Sodom. She loved Sodom. She loved Lot, too, but it was a *lot* of Sodom that she loved. And she didn’t want to leave it. She was probably a member of the country club, the sewing club, and the Shakespeare club. In fact, there wasn’t a club in town that she was not a member of. She just loved these little

get-togethers in the afternoon. I'm not sure but what they met and studied religion in a nice little religious club also. She was right in the thick of it all, my friend, and she didn't want to leave. Her heart was in Sodom. Her body walked out, but she surely left her heart there.

This is a tremendous lesson for us today. I hear a great many Christians talking about how they want to see the Lord come, but they are not living as if they mean it. On Sunday morning, it is difficult to get them to leave their lovely home. And on Sunday night, they are *not* going to leave their lovely home because they love television, too. They have a color television, and they are going to look at the programs on Sunday night because there are some good ones then. But when the Lord comes, my friend, you are going to leave the television; you are going to leave that lovely home; you are going to leave everything. I have just one question to ask you: Will it break your heart to leave all of this down here?

I have asked myself that question many times. To be honest with you, I am not anxious to leave. I would love to stay. I have my friends and loved ones whom I want to be with. And I have the radio ministry that I want to continue. I'll be frank with you, I hope the Lord will just let me stay here awhile longer. But I also want to be able to say that when He does call, I will not have a thing down here which will break my heart to leave—not a thing. I love my home too, but I would just as soon go off and leave it. How do *you* feel about that today? Mrs. Lot turned and looked back, and this is one of the explanations.

The other reason that she looked back is simply that she did not believe God. God had said, "Leave the city, and don't look back." Lot didn't look back; he believed God. But Mrs. Lot did not believe God. She was not a believer, and so she didn't really make it out of the city. She was turned to a pillar of salt.²¹

Genesis 19:27

And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:

Genesis 19:28

And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

The cities were about 18 miles from Abraham's home at Hebron. It was possible for him to see the southern end of the Sea from the immediate vicinity of Hebron. It must have been an awful sight, and is frequently alluded to in Scripture (Deut 29:23; Isa 13:19; Judg 1:7). The plain which is now covered by the Salt or Dead Sea shows in the *great difference of level* between the bottoms of the northern and southern ends of the lake—

²¹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:83). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

the latter being 13 feet and the former 1300—that the southern end was of recent formation, and submerged at the time of the fall of the cities.

Genesis 19:29

And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

[God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out] Lot was delivered because Abraham prayed (Genesis 18:23-33).

The overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah is used as a warning on several occasions in both the OT (Deut. 29:23; Isa. 1:9-10; Jer. 49:18; Amos 4:11) and NT (Matt. 10:15; 11:23-24; Rom. 9:29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7; Rev. 11:8)

Genesis 19:30

And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

Lot had been afraid to flee to the mountains (v. 19) so he went instead to Zoar (v. 22). But now, ironically, he left Zoar for the mountains and lived in a cave (v. 30). Losers often hide in a caves: Joshua's adversaries (Jos 10:16f); Kings in (Rev 6:15-17).

[Lot went up out of Zoar] Lot finally obeyed the angel's first command (Genesis 19:17).

[dwelt in a cave] Ten cave-dwellers:

1. Lot and daughters (Genesis 19:30)
2. Five kings of Canaan (Joshua 10:16)
3. Israel during the judges (Judges 6:2)
4. Israel when Saul reigned (1 Samuel 13:6)
5. David and his men (1 Samuel 22:1-4)
6. David when hunted by Saul (1 Samuel 24)
7. David when at war (2 Samuel 23:13)
8. A hundred prophets (1 Kings 18:4,13)
9. Elijah, hunted by Jezebel (1 Kings 19:9)
10. Israel in war (Ezekiel 33:27)

Genesis 19:31

And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and *there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:*

Thinking their chances for remarrying were slim (Gen. 19:31), the two daughters, whose fiancés were killed in the holocaust of Sodom, took turns getting their father drunk and having sex with him (vv. 32-35). Their acts of incest show Sodom's influence on them.

[Our father is old] He isn't likely to remarry and even if he did, we would be too old for his sons to marry.

Genesis 19:32

Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

[let us make our father drink wine] They surely saw many drunks in Sodom.

Genesis 19:33

And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

[lay with their father] Ten cases of incest:

1. Lot and his two daughters (Genesis 19:31-36)
2. Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 20:12-13)
3. Nahor and Milcah (Genesis 11:29)
4. Reuben and Bilhah (Genesis 35:22; Genesis 49:4)
5. Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38:16-18; 1 Chron. 2:4)
6. Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20)
7. Amnon and Tamar (2 Samuel 13:14)
8. Absalom and David's wives (2 Samuel 16:21)
9. Herod (Matthew 14:3-4; Mark 6:17-18; Luke 3:19)
10. A Corinthian (1 Cor. 5)

While all these would have been condemned by the law of Moses (Leviticus 18:6-18; Leviticus 20:11-21; Deut. 22:30; Deut. 27:20-23), such marriages as that of Abraham and his half-sister, and Nahor and Milcah were excusable during this period (Acts 17:30).

Genesis 19:34

And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

Genesis 19:35

And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

Genesis 19:36

Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

Genesis 19:37

And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.

[**Moab**] Hebrew: *Mow'ab* (H4124), from my father.

Genesis 19:38

And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

[**Ben-ammi**] Hebrew: *ben 'ammiy* (H1151), son of my people (cp. Hosea 2:1). Begotten in shame, both sons had a shameful history (Numbers 22-24; Deut. 2:9,19; Judges 3; Judges 11; 1 Samuel 11; 2 Samuel 8; 2 Samuel 10), and both were cursed (Deut. 23:3; Neh. 13:1,23-25; Isaiah 11:14; Zeph. 2).

Perennial enemies of Israel: “Moab” sounds like the words “from father,” and “Ben-Ammi” means “son of my kinsman.” “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal 6:7).

Moabites and Ammonites. One primary intent of the ancestral narrative is to demonstrate the origin of all of the peoples that inhabited Canaan and Transjordan. Archaeological survey of the area indicates a resettlement between the fourteenth and twelfth centuries B.C., and the language of both the Moabites and Ammonites is similar to Hebrew. Although both are considered enemy nations for most of their history, it is unlikely that their “birth” as a result of the incestuous union between Lot and his daughters (see Deut. 2:9; Psalm 83:5-8) is simply a political or ethnic slur. The initiative taken by Lot’s daughters in the face of likely childlessness and the extinction of Lot’s household may have appeared to them as the only feasible option in their desperate plight.

Bible Knowledge Commentary gives Four major motifs are in this chapter: God's swift judgment on the vile Canaanites, Lot's close attachment to the wicked society, God's merciful sparing of Lot from the doom, and "the rebirth of Sodom" in the cave.

Through these, Israel could see that if God judges a people severely, He is righteous because of their great evil. She also could learn of the folly of becoming attached to the wickedness of Canaan.

How should one live, then, knowing how God dealt with the Canaanites? The lesson is quite clear: "Do not love the world or anything in the world.... [for] the world and its desires [lusts] pass away" (1 John 2:15, 17) under the judgment of God. It is dangerous and folly to become attached to the present corrupt world system because it awaits God's swift and sudden destruction.

Jesus referred to Genesis 19:26 to warn of the destruction to come on unbelieving Israel: "Remember Lot's wife!" (Luke 17:32) When Christ returns, people should not look back as she did (Luke 17:30-31). If an unbeliever craves the best of this world he will lose both this world (since it passes away) and life in the next world (Luke 17:33-37).

Jesus also said that if the miracles He did in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, the Sodomites would have repented (Matt. 11:23). As it is, "it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment" than for the cities of Galilee (Matt. 11:24). This signifies that God judges according to knowledge, and that judgment greater than physical destruction awaits sinners.²²

Torah Class: But, the ever-weak Lot wasn't satisfied with his safe haven in Tzo'ar. Behaving as a carnal Believer, and in yet another bad judgment, Lot left the place God had prepared for him, and took his two daughters with him, and they moved into a cave up in the hill country. Lot, because of his fears and lack of obedience and discipline and faith, had put his daughters in a terrible predicament. They were now in a remote location and far from any husband prospects; archeology has shown that the area to which Lot and his 2 daughters migrated was utterly barren and without population centers during this era. His daughters, physically mature enough to bear children, would have been terribly ashamed for NOT having children, because that was the primary duty of a woman in those days. So, now without husbands and apparently yet to bear children, the sisters made a pact with each other: they were going to get their father drunk, and have sex with him so they would have children. This seemed perfectly fine to their twisted little minds, for they had been raised up in the city of Sodom where this wicked act would have been par for the course. But, this was NOT normal, not even for Biblical times. A man, fathering children by his own daughters, was looked down upon. And, the result of this abomination was two children who would go on to become the founders of the nations of Moab and Ammon: two archenemies of Israel, and therefore, of God. It is amazing what our selfish and faithless acts can lead to.

We now come to the Bible story that has gained such universal and legendary status: the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. What is really rather odd, I think, is that where one would expect that a long and agonizingly detailed account of this cataclysm would be

²² Bible Knowledge Comentary

left for us to read...one so horrific that we would pay very close attention and do what we could to avoid the same fate...we have but 4 or 5 total verses! To say detail is lacking is an enormous understatement. All we're told is that the destruction came from the sky; it came down like a rain of fire and brimstone (burning sulfur). It is an interesting choice of words: for burning sulfur was used to destroy the garbage dumps located just outside the city walls of ancient cities. Once lit, sulfur burns with a high heat, and emits such a strong and definite odor that it could mask the foulest of other common odors. And, of course, the fire purged pests and diseases. We're also aware that fire, in the Bible, is symbolic of purging evil and refining precious metals. God destroyed what He saw as a garbage heap of perverted humanity, using a method sure to be understood by all who knew of this judgment.

Rather than focus on the horror and death and divine retribution, the Bible story of Sodom and Gomorrah focuses on the moral aspects that CAUSED the destruction; the destruction itself is almost incidental.

Now, what do we make of this phrase in verse 26, whereby Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt, because she looked back as she was fleeing? The Hebrew term "not looking back" is an idiom; it simply means to dally or to hesitate. What appears to have actually happened is that Lot's wife didn't heed the warnings and lagged behind. The Angels, along with Lot and the two daughters who were still living at home; pulled her outside the city but she must have stopped just outside the walls. The indication is that IMMEDIATELY upon Lot and His family stepping outside the city walls, the destruction began. Lot's wife suffered the same fate as the other inhabitants of the district.

It has long been thought that this tradition about her becoming a pillar of salt was a redaction sometime after the time of the Jewish exile to Babylon. The oldest traditions did NOT seem to acknowledge this part of the story. We'll not linger here, because it's a riddle that is not likely to be answered.

In verse 27, Abraham is re-injected into the continuing Torah saga; he awakens, stands on a high place, and sees the smoke of the district of Sodom rising far off into the distance, like a furnace, it says. I wonder, did Abraham have faith that God would save Lot from this now completed destruction? We're not told. While Abraham had bargained with God that if 10 righteous people remained in that wicked place, He would not destroy Sodom, Lot was never mentioned by name. We can safely assume Abraham was bargaining for Lot's sake; but can we so confidently assume that Abraham felt certain Lot would be saved? I doubt it. I think the hope was that IF Lot had remained "righteous"..... something which Abraham would not have known for sure..... would God spare Lot and his family. And, Yahweh's answer was yes. WAS Lot still righteous in God's eyes? That was another matter. I cannot know for sure, but as we have watched Abraham's life, we do know that he was just a man; and who would not have wondered if Lot had died amidst the ruins of Sodom, or survived?

Who among us with children and grandchildren don't watch them and wonder at times: are they saved? Will they BE saved? Will the ones who seem to have wondered so far away from the ways of the Lord be rescued from the coming time of eternal destruction? We can hope, but often we cannot know for sure. All we can do is pray..... which is really what Abraham was doing in his bargaining session with the Lord.....praying for the survival of the righteous..... and the rest is in God's hands.

The last 9 verses of Genesis chapter 19 are historically quite important; they chronicle the birth of two nations that will become enemies of Israel.....Moab and Ammon. And, if we could sum this up in a sound byte, it would be that Moab and Ammon were BORN of sin, and so sin was their destiny.

We know from the narrative that Lot is an older man, and that the family of 3 was now living in a cave in the hills to the East of the Dead Sea. Obviously some time had passed; for the 2 daughters of Lot were becoming concerned that they would not be able to fulfill the entire purpose that women of that era believed they were put onto this earth: to give birth to the next generation.

I don't think we need to think too far out-of-the-box to understand from the statement in verse 31 that ".....our father is old and there is no man on earth to come in to us in the manner customary in the world"..... this family was convinced that they were as Noah and his small family were..... the only people left on planet earth as a result of God's judgment on the world. The two girls apparently did not understand that what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah was but a localized disaster; and it would seem that neither did Lot.

We have watched Lot become more and more fearful, less interested in facing the world, and more interested in just assuming there was little left to do but eke out a meager existence and die when it was his time. Quite literally, the 3 remaining family members of Lot thought they had witnessed the end of the world. Does faith bring fears of this kind? Heavens no! Are you living in a constantly fearful state? I can assure, that fear is NOT from God, nor does it have anything to do with being God-fearing.

The two daughters ply their father with wine, get him drunk, and then have sex with him in order to get pregnant. The older daughter was the first to bear a child....Moab.....and then the younger produces Ammon. These verses and others in Deuteronomy and the Psalms attest to the kinship of the people of Moab and Ammon to Lot. Sometimes Moab and Ammon are referred to as brothers, but that was just a common way of speaking, as we speak of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. It is interesting that in Deuteronomy two nations are singled out as being those with which intermarriage to Israelites may not take place: Moab and Ammon. And, we know from archeology that Moab and Ammon were well-established nations long before the Exodus.

Here is the last we will hear of Lot; what an inglorious epitaph is written for him. What an unsavory last chapter of his life is left for posterity. How long he lived, we don't know. What he did from this point forward, we don't know. We only know that he lived anything than a victorious life.²³

²³ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

The Book of Jasher:

45 And the Lord sent for two of the angels that had come to Abraham's house, to destroy Sodom and its cities.

46 And the angels rose up from the door of Abraham's tent, after they had eaten and drunk, and they reached Sodom in the evening, and Lot was then sitting in the gate of Sodom, and when he saw them he rose to meet them, and he bowed down to the ground.

47 And he pressed them greatly and brought them into his house, and he gave them victuals which they ate, and they abode all night in his house.

48 And the angels said to Lot, Arise, go forth from this place, thou and all belonging to thee, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of this city, for the Lord will destroy this place.

49 And the angels laid hold upon the hand of Lot and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hands of his children, and all belonging to him, and they brought him forth and set him without the cities.

50 And they said to Lot, Escape for thy life, and he fled and all belonging to him.

51 Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah and upon all these cities brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.

52 And he overthrew these cities, all the plain and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground; and Ado the wife of Lot looked back to see the destruction of the cities, for her compassion was moved on account of her daughters who remained in Sodom, for they did not go with her.

53 And when she looked back she became a pillar of salt, and it is yet in that place unto this day.

54 And the oxen which stood in that place daily licked up the salt to the extremities of their feet, and in the morning it would spring forth afresh, and they again licked it up unto this day.

55 And Lot and two of his daughters that remained with him fled and escaped to the cave of Adullam, and they remained there for some time.

56 And Abraham rose up early in the morning to see what had been done to the cities of Sodom; and he looked and beheld the smoke of the cities going up like the smoke of a furnace.

57 And Lot and his two daughters remained in the cave, and they made their father drink wine, and they lay with him, for they said there was no man upon earth that could raise up seed from them, for they thought that the whole earth was destroyed.

58 And they both lay with their father, and they conceived and bare sons, and the first born called the name of her son Moab, saying, From my father did I conceive him; he is the father of the Moabites unto this day.

59 And the younger also called her son Benami; he is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

60 And after this Lot and his two daughters went away from there, and he dwelt on the other side of the Jordan with his two daughters and their sons, and the sons of Lot grew up, and they went and took themselves wives from the land of Canaan, and they begat children and they were fruitful and multiplied.²⁴

²⁴ The Book of Jasher, Faithfully Translated 1840, Hebrew to English, J.H.Perry & Co, Salt Lake City UT

Be Obedient:

Lot, the friend of the world (Gen. 19)

This chapter records the sad consequences of Lot's spiritual decline; then Lot passes off the scene while Abraham's story continues (see 1 John 2:17). Abraham was the friend of God, but Lot was the friend of the world (see James 4:4); and the contrasts between these two men are easy to see.

Locations (Gen. 19:1). When the heavenly contingent came to visit Abraham, he was at his tent door; but Lot was sitting in the gate of a wicked city. Abraham was a pilgrim and stranger, only passing through this world; but Lot had gradually abandoned his tent and settled down in Sodom. Instead of keeping his eyes on the heavenly city (Heb. 11:10, 14–16), Lot looked toward Sodom and began to walk by sight (Gen. 13:10–11). Then he moved his tent near Sodom (13:12), and finally he moved into Sodom (14:12). Lot's location in the gate indicates that he was a man of some authority, for that was where official business was conducted (Ruth 4:1ff).

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.

Times (Gen. 19:1). It was early afternoon when the Lord and His angels visited Abraham (18:1), but it was evening when the angels entered Sodom. Abraham was "walking in the light" while Lot was "walking in darkness" (1 John 1:5–10).

Visitors (Gen. 19:1). Only the two angels visited Lot, for the Lord could not fellowship with Lot and his family as He did with Abraham and Sarah. Even though Lot was a believer, his life was such that the Lord did not feel "at home" with him. It is the separated believer who enjoys the close walk (2 Cor. 6:14–18) and communion (John 14:21–24) with the Lord. Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest translated Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:17 "that the Christ might finally settle down and feel completely at home in your hearts through your faith" (WUEST). Unlike Abraham, Lot had no tent or altar; and the Lord could not fellowship with him.

Hospitality (Gen. 19:2–11). Lot called himself a "servant," but you do not see him *hastening* to prepare a meal as Abraham did; nor did he stand by to see what further service he could render. But the arrival of the men of the city at the door for immoral purposes was the climax of the evening. ("Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them" is the NIV translation of 19:5.) Lot was willing to sacrifice his two unmarried daughters to the lust of the crowd (see Jud. 19), but the angels intervened. What had happened to Lot's personal values that he would offer his daughters to satisfy the sensual appetites of a mob? (In contrast, Abraham would offer his son to the Lord.)

Messages (Gen. 19:12–13). God's message to Abraham was a joyful one: he and Sarah would have the promised son within a year. But the message to Lot was frightening: God was going to destroy Sodom and everything in it! God would have spared the city had the angels found ten believers; but since that was not possible, God mercifully rescued the believers they did find (19:16). God's message to the lost world is that judgment is

coming, but His promise to His own people is that He will rescue them (1 Thes. 5:1–11; 2 Peter 2:4–10).

Influence (Gen. 19:14). Because of his faith and obedience, Abraham was a blessing to his home and to the whole world. Because of his worldliness, Lot had no spiritual influence either in the city or in his own home. His married daughters and their husbands laughed at him and refused to leave the city. Even his wife was so in love with Sodom that she had to take one last look, and that look killed her (Gen. 19:26; Luke 17:32). Lot's two unmarried daughters accompanied him out of the city; but they ended up in a cave, getting their father drunk and committing incest with him. After separating from Abraham, Lot had allowed his character to deteriorate; and his influence declined with it.

Attitudes (Gen. 19:15–26). 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. Now God has to take Lot *by the hand* and forcibly drag him out of Sodom! First, Lot lingered; then he argued; then he begged to be allowed to go his own way. Instead of being grateful for God's mercy and obeying his rescuers, Lot resisted them and created trouble for them. In contrast, Abraham obeyed God's will even to the point of offering up his own son.

Consequences (Gen. 19:27–38). The result of the Lord's visit to Abraham was new hope and excitement as Abraham and Sarah joyfully anticipated the birth of a son. Lot, however, lost everything when Sodom was destroyed; and he himself was saved "yet as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:15). His daughters gave birth to two sons, whose descendants would be enemies to the Jewish nation. Abraham saw the cities of the plain destroyed (Ps. 91:8) and knew that God had not found ten righteous people. But God delivered Lot *because of Abraham* (Gen. 19:29). It was wholly a matter of God's grace and mercy (19:19).

Lot was conformed to the world (Rom. 12:2). All that he lived for went up in smoke and was buried under ruins somewhere in the area around the Dead Sea. Lot is a warning to all believers not to love the world, become friendly with the world, or be stained by the world (James 1:27), because the day of reckoning finally comes.

3. Jesus, the Friend of sinners

While it is true that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is an example of God's righteous judgment (Jude 7), it is also true that God's love for lost sinners is clearly seen in this story. Jesus certainly did not approve of the lifestyle of the men of Sodom, but He came to save sinners just like those in Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 9:9–17). When He ministered on earth, He was known as "a Friend of tax collectors and sinners" (11:19)—*and He was!*

Consider our Lord's love for the people of the wicked cities of the plain. To begin with, He was long-suffering toward them as He beheld their sin (Gen. 18:20; 19:13). Just as Abel's blood cried out to God from the ground (4:10), so the sins of the people cried out from the wicked cities. God is long-suffering and holds back His judgment so that sinners will have time to repent (2 Peter 3:1–9).

Not only was our Lord long-suffering, but He was willing to listen to Abraham's intercession and consider sparing Sodom for ten righteous people. When the time came for the cities to be burned up, He sent His angels to rescue Lot and his family *even though the ten righteous people could not be found!* "But where sin abounded, grace

abounded much more” (Rom. 5:20, NKJV). Did Lot deserve to be delivered? Of course not! *But do any of us deserve to be saved from the wrath to come? Of course not!*

The most amazing thing is that Jesus Christ *died for the sinners in Sodom and Gomorrah!* “For Christ also has suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18, NKJV). Christ did not die for good people, because there are none. He died for the *ungodly* (Rom. 5:6) and for *sinners* (5:8). We may not have committed the same sins as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, but we are sinners just the same; and apart from faith in Jesus Christ, we cannot be saved from the judgment to come.

The situation is no different today. Jesus is still the Friend of sinners and will save all who come to Him in true repentance and faith. He needs intercessors and witnesses who will pray and tell lost sinners that Jesus died for them and they can make a new beginning if they will trust Him.

The inhabitants of the cities of the plain had no idea that they were awakening that morning to the last day of their lives (Gen. 19:23). Life was going on as usual, and then the fire fell (Luke 17:26–30).

When the judgment comes, will you be like Abraham and not have to worry about the wrath of God? Or, like Lot, will you be saved “as by fire”? Or, like the people of Sodom, will you be lost forever?

“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God; for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:6–7).²⁵

²⁵Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be obedient* (Ge 19:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.