

Bible Stories

SODOM and GOMORRAH

Genesis 13:10-13

June 04, 2022

Continuing our series, Bible Stories, we come to the story of **SODOM** and **GOMORRAH**.

Early on in the story of Abraham and his family, we come the moment Lot chose to connect himself to Sodom and Gomorrah.

The flocks and herds had become so large that Abraham and Lot's employees were starting to fight over water and grazing land. Being the patriarch, Abraham should have gotten first choice, instead, he gave Lot first choice:

- **Genesis 13:10-13** - Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered¹¹ So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east....¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. ¹³ Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.

Years before its ultimate destruction, the reputation of Sodom was already well known, **AND YET** Lot **CHOSE – INTENTIONALLY** – to move there.

We don't hear from Lot again until **Genesis 14**, when he and the rest of Sodom and Gomorrah were taken as war loot by Chedorlaomer and his allies, which brings us to **Genesis 18**.

As was the custom, when Abraham saw 3 strangers coming down the road, he invited them to rest and have lunch. After lunch, the 3 men headed for Sodom and Abraham walked with them.

Because Abraham and God were friends and because God desired that Abraham should understand HIS definition of righteousness and instruct future generations regarding it, He chose to tell Abraham what was about to happen:

- **Genesis 18:20-33** - "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."

Here we see another investigative judgement on the part of God {Genesis 2, 9, 11} – He has come down to see if what He has heard about Sodom and Gomorrah was true.

As the angels turned toward Sodom, Abraham and God lingered and Abraham begins one of scriptures great conversations with a question,

- **Genesis 18:23-33** - "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing-- to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" ²⁶ The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." ²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?" "If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it." ²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?" He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it." ³⁰ Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?" He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." ³¹ Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?" He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it." ³² Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." ³³ When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

At first glance, Abraham appears to be haggling with God like he would any seller in the marketplace. In truth, Abraham was interceding on behalf of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah – on behalf of his nephew, Lot. Abraham knew God and he knew that God is righteous and judges fairly and He knew that God would never act out of impulse.

The heartbreaking reality was that there were not 10 right-doing {righteous} people – there was barely 1 – but out of his extravagant mercy, God agreed to 10 – if there were just 10 righteous people, He would spare everyone.

The Story {Genesis 19:1-26}:

The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. ² "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." ³ But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. ⁴ Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom-- both young and old-- surrounded the house. ⁵ They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." ⁶ Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him ⁷ and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. ⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof." ⁹ "Get out of our way," they replied. And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge! We'll treat you worse than them." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. ¹⁰ But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. ¹¹ Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door. ¹² The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here-- sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, ¹³ because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it." ¹⁴ So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking. ¹⁵ With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished." ¹⁶ When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them. ¹⁷ As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!" ¹⁸ But Lot said to them, "No, my lords, please! ¹⁹ Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die. ²⁰ Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it-- it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared." ²¹ He said to him, "Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. ²² But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it." (That is why the town was called Zoar.) ²³ By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah-- from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵ Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities-- and also the vegetation in the land. ²⁶ But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

When Abraham looked toward the plain of Jordan the next morning and saw *"the dense smoke rising from the land"* {Genesis 19:27-28}, he knew that God had been righteous and just in His judgment. He had sought **AND NOT FOUND** even 10 righteous people.

What do we do with this story?

I am going to state flatly that it is my belief that God had to do something. He had to intervene. Sodom and Gomorrah had stepped into the realm of "the thoughts of the people were only evil continuously". If left to themselves, the cancer would have spread. The cancer had to be removed.

Progression of Sin

In Genesis 13 - Lot separated from Abraham and pitched his tent near Sodom, even though the people of this area *"were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD."*

By the time of the war in Genesis 14, Lot was living in Sodom.

- **Genesis 14:11-12** - The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. ¹² They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since **he was living** in Sodom.

By Genesis 19, Lot was an elder of some influence sitting at the gate of Sodom.

- **Genesis 19:1** Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.

Within a short period of time, Lot had pitched his tent toward Sodom → moved into Sodom → became an elder of Sodom.

The sad thing is.... Lot had failed in the only place where his influence really mattered. He had failed to turn any heart toward God. Lot had squandered his knowledge of God. Instead of being an **INFLUENCER** for good, He had been an **INFLUENCEE** for evil.

Lot, had rightly, called what the crowd wanted to do, *"evil"* – He saw their actions for what they were, and according to 2nd Peter, was tortured daily by what he saw around him, **HOWEVER**, he had been so desensitized to sin, so influenced by sin, that he failed to see that offering his virgin daughters to the crowd, *"to do with as they saw fit"*, as equally grievous in the sight of God.

The wickedness of the city may have caused Lot pain, but his very presence in the city and his own actions say "acceptance" if not downright "approval" of the swamp he had chosen.

- **Dan Augsburger** – Among the more important things to consider in the Christian life is the power that comes in "beholding". We become changed into the likeness of the things we "behold". "Beholding" good things is very positive and causes us to become like the positive thing(s) we are

beholding; “beholding” bad and evil things, we become like those bad things. I am not sure most of us realize to what degree we are influenced, either for good or for bad, by the things we “behold”.

- **Philippians 4:8** - Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable -- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy -- think about such things.

Yes, God spared Lot, but not because of any inherent goodness on his part, but because when the angels said, go, he went, even if somewhat reluctantly AND he didn't look back. His wife, however did.....

The Hebrew verb for **“looked” (nabat)**, indicates a prolonged, intense gaze. It wasn't just a glance; it was a look of pleasure and favor as she remembered all that she had been dragged away from {not saved from} – a life she loved – a life she was going to miss – a life she would still have if she hadn't been forcibly removed. In that one action, her allegiance was made clear.

That truly is the danger of dancing with the devil. First you abhor sin than you accept sin than you embrace sin.