

Genesis 18-19 • The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

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Genesis chapters 18 and 19 go together and there's just a lot of reading here. But these are some great chapters. It says in verse 1, *“And the LORD appeared to him (that's Abraham) by the oaks of Mamre, (your Bible may say by the terebinth trees of Mamre if you have a New King James (NKJV)) as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³ and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.*

⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵ while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.”” (ESV) All right, stop there. We're seeing a lot of things just in these first 5 verses, not the least of which, is this incredible Middle Eastern hospitality.

There is no reason to believe that Abraham knew exactly who these people were. He will discover that in the course of conversation and as time passes, but there's no reason to believe that he knew immediately who these people were. In fact, when Abraham says, and I forget, well, it's verse 3, when he says, *“Oh Lord, if I have found favor in your sight,”* even that doesn't tell you exactly who Abraham knew these people to be because the word, Lord, there, is simply the Hebrew, Adon.

It's interesting, we were singing tonight, praise Adonai, which is the longer form of, you know, of the Lord. But Adon is a shorter form, which literally means my Lord, and it can be used to address God. But it was also used commonly to address human beings; someone who was in a position of authority, maybe your master, you would say Adon. So, this doesn't necessarily tell you that Abraham knows who he's talking to. But again, as the narrative continues, we will discover that he will figure out who he's talking to.

You and I will discover who he's talking to and we're going to find that he's talking to the Lord God. He's actually talking to the Lord Himself and we refer to this as a theophany, which means, simply, an appearance of God, or if you

will, literally, a visible manifestation of God. And He can manifest himself any way He wants. We're going to get into the Book of Exodus, and we're going to find out that God is going to appear to Moses in the form of a burning bush or fire within the bush, that is a theophany. In this particular case, He manifests Himself in human form.

Now, that doesn't mean that God became a human at this time, that's not going to happen until Jesus is born of the virgin Mary in what we call the incarnation. This is simply an appearance to Abraham in human form. But we also have very good reason to believe that this is none other than the second person of the Trinity, the Word of God, who will be made flesh in the future: Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

And we believe that in light of a passage that is given to us in John's gospel, let me put it up on the screen for you. From John 1:18, where John writes,

John 1:18 (ESV)

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

You'll notice that John distinguishes the first reference to God, which we understand to be the Father and then the second reference to God; the only God “*who is at the Father's side,*” who we know to be Jesus, who “*has made him known.*” So no one has seen the Father. And so we're going to also discover when we get to the next chapter that the 2 other men along with the Lord are in fact angels, all right, so let's read on.

Verse 6, “*And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick!..”*” Run down to Albertson's and pick up, no he doesn't. You know, I kind of say that in just, just simply because you're going to read here what he asked his wife to do and it's no small task to make a meal for some strangers who show up on your doorstep.

He says to her, “*6... Quick! (get) Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.*” ⁷ *And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly.*” That means they had to slaughter it and skin it and do all the other stuff that goes along with that. And, “*8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.*” So this was, you know, when he invited them in, he said, you know, sit down and wash your feet and I'll get you a little morsel of bread. He went a little beyond that, didn't he?

He made them this, you know, feast and so forth and it says, *“he prepared it and said it before them”* and they ate. And you might look at that and go, huh? So this vision of God, this manifestation of God that appears to be human, sat down and had a meal, huh. Did He need to eat? No, of course not, you know, the Lord, nor the angels needed to eat, but they accommodated Abraham's hospitality since he had gone to the trouble.

And it goes on here and it says, *“⁹ They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” ¹⁰ (and) The LORD said, ...”* Now stop right there. Now, did you notice in your Bible, the word LORD changes. If you look in your Bible, depending on your translation, it's either in all capital letters or it's in small caps. What we call the first letter would be the capital, and then the other O-R-D would be in what we call small caps. Either way, that signals to you that that's a different Hebrew word. This is now YAHWEH, this is Yehowah, or Jehovah, if you will. And so you'll notice that it says, now YAHWEH said. Now, we know exactly who Abraham is conversing with, he is conversing with the Lord God. Well, let's see what happens.

“¹⁰ ... “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women (referring to her ability to conceive a baby) had ceased to be with Sarah.” In other words, there was no longer any menstruation. Her, you know, the baby factory had shut down, long since, alright? So, what happens?

Verse 12, *“ So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?””* Now, again, you'll remember in the last chapter, Abraham laughed when he heard that God was going to bring a son through Sarah, but Sarah's laugh is different, we're going to see that here.

“¹³ The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’””

Verse 14, if this isn't underlined in your Bible and maybe on your refrigerator, it probably should be. *“Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁵ But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” (that wasn't me) for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”* So, Sarah's being confronted with her unbelief here, isn't she? And so, you might say, well, yeah, it seems kind of unfair. You know, Abraham laughed and God didn't say anything to him, and then Sarah laughed, and she kind of gets, you know, buttonholed for it. You know, hey, why'd you laugh, sort of a thing, God sees the heart.

Two people can do the same thing with entirely different motives and for very different reasons and as we are watching this from the outside, we don't see any difference. Abraham laughed, Sarah laughed, they both laughed. God sees the heart, God always sees the heart. Guys, that simple statement that I just made to you, that God sees the heart. Do you understand how many Bible passages or stories in the Bible or Bible verses or Bible truths, that that simple understanding can help you interpret correctly?

You know, I don't know how many questions that I've answered that people have written me or asked me about, that I simply came back and said, well, God sees the heart and people seem to forget that, a lot. But it answers a ton of questions if you simply remember it. And we're going to come up with another one of those interesting answers or statements I should say, that's going to answer a lot of questions here just a little bit in the next chapter.

But I want you to remember here that the way God responded to Sarah's unbelief, it's the way He responds to all of our unbelief, is anything too hard for me? You know, that's a good question. Has the Lord ever put that question to you in the midst of a challenging situation? And you're sitting there freaking out and, you know, wondering if you're going to die in the next 5 minutes and the Lord just speaks to your heart and says, is this too tough for me? Is this too hard for me? We have to all reconcile ourselves to the answer. No, it is not too hard for you, God, you can do anything, all right.

Verse 16. *“Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷ (and) The LORD said, (and again, the word LORD there is, YAHWEH) “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”*

²⁰ *Then the LORD said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹ I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.”* Now this is very interesting because God chooses to share this information with Abraham and of course this is going to cause his ears to perk up because he knows his nephew is now living in Sodom, we dealt with that before. But did you notice also, this very interesting language that the Lord uses to speak to Abraham about what He's going to do.

He talks about going down to Sodom and Gomorrah to check the situation out to see if it's really as bad as He's been hearing. Now, this is human language, this is language that is specifically tailored for you and me to be able to understand basically just this concept that God is thorough in His investigation of situations and any justice that He brings out concerning sin is always fair and just, and He does not operate on hearsay. It's one of the worst things to do, isn't it?

Have you ever made an assumption based on hearsay? Something someone told you about something someone else said or did or whatever, and you made a decision to change something or operate in some way based on what you heard, only to come to find out that hearsay was incorrect. Well, what the Lord is saying to Abraham is, this has come up before me, these cries of unrighteousness and I want you to know that I am thorough in this area and whatever judgment or punitive measures that I take as it relates to what's going on in Sodom and Gomorrah is based on the knowledge of a personal investigation and the personal wisdom of God.

So it says in verse 22, *“So the men turned from there (referring to the 2 angels) and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! (take note of this next sentence and I would encourage you to underline it or at least take note of it) Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” ²⁶ And the LORD said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”*

“²⁷ Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” (in other words, if there's just 45 there) And he said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.” (meaning righteous people) ²⁹ Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.”

³⁰ Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.” ³¹ He said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.” ³² Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but

this once. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “*For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.*”³³ *And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.*” All right, let's stop here and let's talk about this for just a minute. Because what you're reading here in this section of Genesis is really just an intercessory prayer, this is what intercession is really all about.

And Abraham's intercession, you'll notice, is based on his belief. I was going to say assumption here a moment ago, but then I thought, no, it's more than an assumption, it is a firmly set belief that God is righteous and fair. Now, I say that, but I ask you, do you believe that God is righteous and fair?

Again, on a theological quiz, I think pretty much all of us would get that right. When you're being made to endure a very difficult circumstance in your life, that question comes up again. And we begin to kind of do the, have you ever noticed that kids have this built in? If anybody's ever raised kids, do an experiment if you've got a couple of kids like under 10. Give one of them a big piece of candy and give the other one a small piece of candy and just see what they say. Kids, you know, they instantly know, they'll, the one with the small piece of candy will look at the one with the big one, they'll look back at you and they'll say, that's not fair. And you didn't train them that way, it's just built in.

And sometimes we grow up and we have that same demand and we look at what God is doing and we really have a hard time figuring it out and so we immediately charge Him with being unfair. This is not fair, this just isn't fair. It's not fair that I have to deal with this, right? So I'll ask you again, do you believe that God is fair? You see again, you don't get it right on a theological quiz, but when you're going through a hard time, I dare say most of us would stumble in this area.

But what Abraham is saying, and by the way, you'll notice he forms it as a question, but it's a rhetorical question. “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?*” He's asking it in the form of a question, but he's not looking for an answer because he believes he knows the answer. God will only do what is right and just and therefore, I can talk to Him about this freely. Lord, what happens if you only find 10 people among that entire population? What then? I'll spare the whole place on behalf of those 10. Now that's the mercy of God, right?

But once again, this is a question that I believe every believer needs to grapple with. The NIV puts it this way, “*will not the judge of all the earth do right?*” And this is, by the way, that other statement that I was telling you that answers a

myriad of questions from the Bible and I mean, the questions come in hot and heavy. How's God going to deal with those people who have never heard the gospel? How does God deal with little children who die before they ever get a chance to hear about Jesus? How will God judge the mentally incompetent? And those questions go on and on. How's God going to do that? How's God going to...? What's He going to do there? And every time somebody asks one of those questions, you know that they are not convinced of God's fairness. It's not that they just want to know the answer to the question, they want to know if God's fair.

And you know, I get these questions pretty regularly and you know what my answer is? Genesis 18:25, the judge of all the earth will do right. Sometimes guys, that's all we have, that's it, that's all I can give you. How's this going to work? All I know is this, God is fair. No one will ever stand before Him and say, but you didn't give me a chance.

You've heard me say that lots of times, the judge of all the earth will do right. You either are going to believe that or you're not and if you're not going to believe it, you're going to have a really rocky relationship with God, you know. I mean, you're going to really struggle and you're not going to, you're not going to want to take things to Him. You're not going to want to pray about things because you're not really sure that He's going to do what's right, I'd rather just not ask. It's like, I don't want to poke the bear, you know, because I might get Him thinking about me in some way and then I'll get something that I don't want. All those attitudes, all those thoughts come down to the question that Abraham is asking rhetorically, but you and I need to ask practically. Do you believe that the judge of all the earth will do right, will do justly?

Chapter 19, *“The two angels (and that's by the way where we find out that these other two, this is the first time we're told that the other two are angels. So, The two angels) came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth ² and said, “My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way.” They said, “No; we will spend the night in the town square.” ³ But he pressed them strongly; ...”*

Well, you're seeing a couple of things here. First of all, again, you're seeing that Middle Eastern hospitality. You just, you don't leave people out in the city square, you just don't and it doesn't matter if they are your enemy. Now this is crazy, this is what kind of wars with our modern American sort of an idea, you know. In the Middle Eastern understanding of hospitality, even if your enemy

comes under your roof, you are obligated to protect him or her, even laying down your own life.

And as we're going to see, as this chapter goes on, even above the safety of your own family members. Now that's hard for us as Americans to understand, it really is. But it is a part of that Middle Eastern fabric of how they dealt with people and so, that's the first thing you're seeing here. But the other reason, that Lot, I'm sure, is prevailing upon these 2 angels, which I doubt he knows our angels at this point, yet, but the reason he's prevailing upon them is he knows how wicked the men of Sodom are as it relates to their sexual perversion and so he wants to get them in off the streets.

So it says, *“³ But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.”* Can you, here the angels are eating again. Can you imagine when they got back up to heaven, it was like, I am not going to take another bite for a thousand years, I am stuffed, right? They didn't have to eat anyway, but here's another big meal, you know. I imagine they looked at each other and kind of rolled their eyes, you ready for this? All right.

Verse 4. *“But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. ⁵ And they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.””* And the phrase, *“may know them,”* is a euphemism for sexual relations. And that is why the New King James (NKJV) translates this, *“that we may know them carnally”* and why the New American Standard Bible (NASB) says, *“that we may have relations with them.”*

What those versions are doing is they're giving you more an interpretation rather than a translation and that's okay, because we don't use that today. When we say, hey, I'd like to get to know you, we mean, I want to sit down and have a conversation so that I can learn about who you are. But in that biblical language, it literally meant, physical relations.

So it says, so you see what's going on here. The men of the city have gathered and said, bring those men out, so you know what's going on. And this is why the city of Sodom became known for what we call today sodomy, which, of course is physical sexual relations between 2 men. It is referred to that way, as that, to this day. So he understands what's going on and you'll notice what he says in verse 6, *“Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, (and of course he's doing that to protect the inhabitants of his home) ⁷ and (he) said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.”*

Did you notice? See, so Lot knows what they're talking about and you can see what he calls it, he calls it wickedness, okay. But then Lot goes on to say something equally as shocking. Verse 8, *“Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.”* Boy, that just kind of, it's like a sock in the gut, isn't it? When you read that and you're like...

Okay, a couple of things you got to remember. Remember what I told you about Middle Eastern hospitality? The obligation was to protect even above your own family members, above your own life. We don't get that, but that was part of what they did. But second thing I want you to remember here, Lot is not a hero in this story, okay? It's very important you know that. Lot is not considered a hero as it relates to what he is saying right now and this whole idea of handing over his daughters. What he is saying to these men is really just as reprehensible as what the men have said about, you know, him bringing out these guests in his home.

But we have to understand this cultural responsibility that was taken on by a homeowner to protect the people under his roof and you'll notice that he says that very thing. *“For they have come under the shelter of my roof”* and again, any other Middle Eastern person would know what that means. I will protect them to the very end, whatever is necessary. But again, that doesn't make Lot's actions or statements correct in any way as it relates to his daughters.

Verse 9, *“But they said, “Stand back!” And they said, “This fellow came to sojourn, (in other words, he's an outsider) and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down.”* I want to stop there for just a moment to show you what happens when people are involved in sinful and wicked behavior and you say something to them and you point it out, did you catch it? What did they say to Lot? So you've become the judge, so you're now judging us, right? Well, that's the response, that's the response you're always going to.

You'll get it today too, same response. If you mention, whether it's on a comment on Facebook or on a YouTube video or some other place in social media ville and you make some comment about some behavior that is wrong or wicked or sinful, and people are going to instantly accuse you of being a judge, you know. And judging hypocritically and all the other things that go along with it, it's just the way it goes. It is very important, people, and I'm not suggesting that we stay away completely from the public square as it relates to joining in

on the conversation, but we got to be smarter about the way we go about it. And the way we often go about it as Christians is really dumb. And what we do, is we kind of get on there and we go, well, I think or we'll just make a blanket statement, well, that's wicked or that's wrong, that's sinful. Well, who cares what you think? I'll tell you one thing, the unbelievers don't, they couldn't possibly care less about what you think.

What we have to start doing is we have to start sharing the power of God's Word so that it's not what you think, it's not your opinion, it's not your judgment. It's God's judgment and they ultimately have to deal with God. It's like, hey, don't look at me, man, I didn't make it up. Let me, you know, let me share with you what the Word of God says.

Now, they might say to you, I don't care what the Word of God says. Hey, that's their business, that's between them and God. But when we simply get on there and state what we believe as our opinion, or we do it without any sort of understanding so that they can understand where did this come from? Where does this understanding...?

See the world looks at physical relations between a man and a man, they're like, so what? Who cares, right? They've gotten completely away from God, they've gotten completely away from His Word and what happens when a culture does that? Anything goes, anything goes. And if you think we're going to stay where we are right now in our culture, you're sorely misguided. It will get much worse before the Lord returns.

Even some things which today are still socially unacceptable, like sex with children, we're horrified at the thought. Oh, don't think there aren't people working toward getting that into the mainstream of society as well, because they are. And all they got to do is just keep bringing it up and keep bringing it up and keep bringing it up so that it's eventually normalized.

And so here we are giving our opinion on what we think, you know, and it doesn't matter what you think. Let me share with you what God's Word says, you know, we are to speak the truth in love and that's hard, I know, in the public square. Maybe where you work or where you hang out with people and there are unbelievers among them, and perhaps they start saying things and you're just tempted to speak up and you want to just speak your mind.

It's important to pray through your response to speak the truth in love, but to also let them know this is not just my opinion. I'm not just giving you my opinion because you know what, my opinion isn't worth squat and frankly,

neither is yours, you might even say to someone, you know. You know what really matters is what God says. Well, I don't believe in God. Well, that's between you and God, there's nothing I can do about that. But let me tell you what the Word of God says, all right.

I think I'm at verse 10, *“But the men (and that's referring to the angels) reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. ¹¹ And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.”* How cool would that have been to see?

They're standing right there and all of a sudden they're like, and it doesn't mean that they're blind, necessarily, that they can't see anything. I think if they couldn't see anything, they would be going, I can't see anything and they'd be wandering off because now they got a bigger problem than trying to get into the house. I think they just can't find the door, wouldn't that have been cool? It's like, here's the house, but where's the door? You know, it's lost and it's just, it's crazy. Anyway, I would have loved to have been there to see that.

Verse 12. *“Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. ¹³ For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.” ¹⁴ So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, (obviously men of Sodom) “Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city.” But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.”* And why do you suppose that is? Because when there's hardness of heart, you know, they'd been around this behavior and to them, it's like, what's wrong with what's going on here? We see this all the time.

See, that's what happens when you normalize sin in a culture? It becomes normalized to the point where people don't see it as wrong anymore. And then we start telling them, hey, repent, the kingdom of God is near, Jesus is coming back and they're like, repent for what? What's going, what I see going on in the world is entirely normal. Isn't that what people are trying to tell you about same sex things and all these other things that are going on? They're just telling you it's normal.

Over and over in movies they're telling you this is normal, this is normal, this is normal and they've convinced the world that this is normal, right? And so we come along and we say, we need to repent, God's going to, you know, the judgment of the Lord is coming and they're like, for what? What are you talking

about? You sound like a crazy person. What's going on in the world is completely normal, you know? And don't think Christians haven't been caught.

It's not completely uncommon for me to get a note from a born again Christian who says, “pastor Paul, tell me, what's wrong with a gay couple or a homosexual couple who loves themselves, who love the Lord and are walking in obedience to God, what's wrong with that?” Do you hear what that said? And I come back and I say, “if they love the Lord and are walking in obedience to the Lord, they wouldn't be living in that condition.”

But you see, we've gotten sucked in as a culture, even as Christians, we've gotten sucked into it, and now we're getting soft and it's happening all over. I got a note from a lovely woman down in California. She attended a church for years, 15 years plus or whatever and now the church has just suddenly decided that, you know, homosexuality is great, it's cool, it's wonderful, we're all good with it and she's heartbroken. And she's saying, pastor Paul, what do I do? Well it's happening guys, it's happening all around us.

So are we supposed to get angry? No, we're not to get angry, we are to love the sinner and hate the sin and I know that's hard. But we have to remember God so loved the world that He gave His only Son and we need to love those people, too. We need to love them into the kingdom. You know, the Bible says it is His kindness that leads us to repentance. (Romans 2:4) But there's a darkness, there's a..., you know. That's why the sons in law of Lot's daughters thought he was joking.

Verse 15, *“As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.”* ¹⁶ *But he lingered.* (notice that, there's no urgency there) *So the men seized him (eventually) and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.*

¹⁷ *And as they brought them out, one said, “Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away.”* ¹⁸ *And Lot said to them, “Oh, no, my lords.* ¹⁹ *Behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die.”* Notice Lot is a man of fear and fear governs him.

And he says, ²⁰ *Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!”* ²¹ *He*

said to him, “Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. ²² Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. (which just means small)

²³ The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. ²⁵ And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, (so it wasn't just Sodom and Gomorrah) and what grew on the ground.” So literally everything died.

By the way, you guys remember back in Genesis chapter 14, we were talking about how there were tar pits in the valley, and some men fell into them during the warfare that was going on. Well, imagine what happened when those tar pits met up with sulfur and fire from heaven, kaboom!, I mean, it would have just torched everything.

But it says in verse 26, “*But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.*” Now, this is one of those interesting stories. I remember reading about it even as a kid or hearing it in a story and you're kind of like, huh, what does that look like? But this was a judgment of the condition of her heart, and it says she looked back. I mean, they were told not to look back, but there's more to looking back than just, you don't need, you shouldn't see this. Obviously there was something about that, but there was also this matter of the heart, this matter of looking back, looking longingly back.

Do you know Jesus made reference to Lot's wife? Jesus talked about her. Let me show you this on the screen. Luke 17, verse 28 and following,

Luke 17:28-32 (ESV)

Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife.

And so the exhortation there is, you run toward me, you don't run back, you run toward me.

“²⁷ And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. ²⁸ And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.” Do you know what's in that land now? You know, it's in that valley now? The Dead Sea, it's where the Dead Sea is. The land is dead and it's been dead ever since God rained fire and sulfur from heaven.

“²⁹ So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.” We'll read these last verses quickly.

“³⁰ Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, (why?) for he was afraid (that's Lot) to live in Zoar. (so he begged to go to Zoar, but now he's afraid to live there) So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. ³¹ And the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth. ³² Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father.” ³³ So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

³⁴ The next day, the firstborn said to the younger, “Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight also. Then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father.”” Why are they doing this? Fear, fear, they're afraid that they're not going to be able to preserve their family line, they're afraid. So fear makes you do all kinds of really stupid things and immoral things.

“³⁵ So they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. ³⁶ Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father.” And I'll just add, through incest and that's what that means.

“³⁷ The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸ The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. (and) He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.” Who were the perennial enemies of Israel and that's what that accomplished. So do not live by fear is the moral to that final story. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for the time that you've given us tonight to go through your Word and Lord, there are many lessons here, many things that we've

learned in these passages. We thank you, Lord, for them, we thank you for the instruction and we pray that we would remember these things as we go forward, that you would call them to our remembrance and that you would use them in our lives to form Christ in our hearts.

We thank you and praise you for the work you are doing ongoingly in our lives to make us into the image of your precious Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray and all God's people said together, amen. God bless you.