

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

"Sodom's day is over, and Gomorrah is no more; and all is ashes; and the neighbor sea no less than the soil experiences a living death!"
 —Tertullian, *On the Pallium* (3rd Century)

"God & Lot"

The Background: Genesis 13:1-13

- In order to avoid conflict between them, Abram and Lot separated from one another with Abram remaining in the land of Canaan and Lot moving through the Jordan Valley to the East.

"And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east." – Gen. 13:10-11

The Geography of the Region

The Jordan River Valley is a lush plain that is good for both farming and grazing animals. There were numerous cities along the eastern coast of the Sea, several of which are mentioned in the Abrahamic narrative. The cities prospered due to trade in salt, bitumen (tar), and potash (used in the production of soap).

- Lot's decision to move into this region seems to have been based solely on his perception of the wealth of the land. This becomes the first illustration of contrast that we see between Abraham and Lot.

The Structure of Genesis 18 & 19:

- The author of Genesis seems to intend these accounts to parallel each other for the purpose of comparing and contrasting Abraham and Lot.
- The New Testament Scriptures declare that they were both _____ men (Gal. 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:7) and yet it is Abraham who is held up in the rest of Scripture as the example of a life of faith while the life of Lot serves a cautionary tale to all.

Genesis 18

- The Lord and two angels come to the place of Abram's dwelling.
 - ➔ Notice that Abraham and his family were dwelling in _____ apart from any of the indigenous peoples of the region. The Lord never gave Abraham instructions to settle in a single location. Rather, he was to "walk through the length and breadth of the land." (Gen. 12:14-18)
- Abraham showed great hospitality to his guests, inviting them to feast with him.
- Abraham's guest delivered to him news of God's blessing which would come to him and his family.
 - ➔ To Sarah, the idea that God could bless her and Abraham seemed unrealistic.
- When the two angels departed for Sodom, the Lord remained and spoke with Abraham.

The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 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." –Gen. 18:17-19

- ⇒ The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah will serve as an _____ to Abraham and his descendants.
- ⇒ In order to receive the blessings that God has promised, Abraham and his descendants must _____ the way of the Lord.
 - ➔ "keep" – *shamar*– This is the same word that was used of Adam's responsibility in the Garden (Gen. 2:15)

Genesis 19

- **The two angels arrived at the gates of Sodom where they are greeted by Lot.**
 - ➔ To sit at the gate of the city was a position of privilege. This shows us that Lot had been accepted into society and had even achieved a position of leadership within the city.
- **Lot showed the messengers great hospitality, inviting them to come and spend the night in his home rather than in the city square.**
 - ➔ In contrast to Abraham, we see that Lot has settled permanently among the people of Sodom.
- **That evening, the men of the city gathered outside of Lot's home demanding to "know" the men staying with Lot.**
 - "know" –yada– This term can be used of the idea of knowing something by experience of the senses. The term is also used as a euphemism for sexual intercourse (Gen. 4:1, 17, 25)
 - ⇒ Lot recognized this as "wickedness" and offered his daughters to the crowd in order to protect the visitors.
 - ⇒ The crowd's response was anger towards Lot who dared to sit in judgment of their actions.
- **As the crowd pressed in on Lot's home, the angels struck them with blindness.**
 - ➔ In various parts of Scripture, physical blindness is associated with spiritual wickedness (Deut. 28:27-29; Is. 6:10; Zech. 11:17)
- **The angels sent Lot to warn his sons-in-law of the coming destruction of the city.**
 - ➔ To them, the idea that God would destroy them and their city seemed to be a joke.
- **Because of their delay, the angels had to remove Lot and his family from Sodom by force.**

Learning from the Lives of Abraham & Lot

1. **The destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah is a warning to God's people that God will surely bring _____ upon those who reject Him and His Word.**

⇒ Sodom & Gomorrah became a byword in Scripture for God's judgment. (Deut. 32:32; Is. 1:9-10; Matt. 11:23; Rev. 11:8)

Jer. 23:14–But in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his evil; all of them have become like Sodom to me, and its inhabitants like Gomorrah."

2. **The life of Lot serves as a warning to God's people that they are not to _____ the world nor the things of the world.**

⇒ Lot chose to live in Sodom because of its wealth.

⇒ This choice had devastating consequences for his family.

➔ The loss of his _____ (Gen. 19:26)

➔ The immorality of his own _____ (Gen. 19:30-38)

3. **The life of Abraham serves as an _____ for God's people to live as he lived.**

By faith... Gal. 3:6-7– "...just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham."

Heb. 11:8-9a– By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents...

As sojourners... Heb. 11:13–These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

1 Pet. 2:9-12–But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.