

## CGYG & LIFE Bible Study – Genesis 18-19

### Read Genesis 18:1-15

-Who were the three men who came to Abraham? (see also Genesis 18:22, 19:1)  
-the LORD (appearing in human form) (18:22) and 2 angels (19:1)

-What promise did the LORD make to Abraham & Sarah? How did Sarah respond, and why? (cf. Gen. 17:17)

- He promised He would return in a year, and Sarah would have a son
- Sarah laughed; unlike Abraham's laugh in Gen 17:17, perhaps had an element of disbelief, given that the LORD rebukes her by asking if anything is too hard for Him (in contrast, He did not rebuke Abraham in Genesis 17)

### Read Genesis 18:16-33

-What does God reveal to Abraham, and why does He reveal it? What does this tell us about God's relationship with Abraham? (see also Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23; John 15:14-15; Psalm 25:14)

- reveals that He is going to 'investigate' the sin of Sodom & Gomorrah – presumably to judge it
- reveals this information because of who Abraham is:
  - chosen by God to become a great nation, through whom the whole earth would be blessed
  - chosen to direct his children and his household in the ways of the LORD
  - the one with whom God had made His covenant
- seems to be inviting Abraham to interact and intercede with Him for Sodom & Gomorrah
  - developing in Abraham same concern for righteousness, justice, and mercy that God Himself has
  - an example for his descendants after him of how to intercede with God
- shows that Abraham is God's friend (Isa 41:8; Jas 2:23), and that he fears God, since God confides in Him (Ps 25:14)
  - as God's friend, knows His Master's business (John 15:14-15)
  - the privilege of God's covenant people, to know His purposes and to be able to intercede before His throne of grace

-On what basis does Abraham intercede with God for Sodom? What can we learn about prayer from his example?

- appeals to God's character – specifically His justice and righteousness; that He will not treat the righteous as He does the wicked
- also appeals to God's patience and forbearance, as he again and again lowers the number
- possible lessons: God hears prayer
  - prayer ought to be rooted in the character of God; not on our own merits
  - earnestness and persistence in prayer important
  - attitude of humility – remember as Abraham did that we are but 'dust and ashes'
  - approaching God with boldness → arises from relationship with God and intimacy with Him

### Read Genesis 19:1-38

-What is the significance of Lot sitting in the gateway of the city (19:1)?

- sitting in the city gate meant he was probably a leader in the city

-Why did God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? (Genesis 13:13; 18:20-21 & 19:13; see also Ezekiel 16:49-50; Jude 7; Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13; Romans 1:18-32)

- they were guilty of great & grievous sins before God
  - these included pride, lack of concern for others; did detestable things before the Lord (Ezek 16:49-50)
  - sexual sins especially – sexual immorality & perversion (Jude 7), to the extent that they were engaging in homosexuality, as seen in these verses
    - homosexuality 'detestable' to God (Lev 18:22; 20:13); punishable by death in the OT
    - seen as shameful and deserving of God's wrath in the NT; one indication of the depth of depravity to which mankind has sunk (Rom 1:18-27)
  - Sodom's sin was not 'lack of hospitality'/treating visitors with disrespect, as some argue
    - point of the passage is that Sodom was so debased that all the men were desiring to have sex with the 2 visitors, and were willing to do it by force; even after they had been struck with blindness, they were still groping for the door!

-Why do you think Lot (and his wife) hesitated to leave Sodom, to the extent that they had to be dragged out and that his wife turned back?

- perhaps had gotten comfortable in the city – seems quite different from the man who went with Abram to follow God to an unknown land
- perhaps afraid that they would lose everything; tied to their way of life
- had become more attached to the city than they should have been

-Consider the progression of Lot's life in the following passages: Genesis 12:4-5; 13:8-13; 14:12; 19:1. What direction did his life take, and why? What was the result of this progression? (see also 2 Peter 2:7-8; Genesis 19:25-26, 30-38)

- started by following Abram to an unknown land → moved toward Sodom → moved into Sodom → became a leader in Sodom
- was a righteous man, but perhaps became more and more complacent with more and more exposure
  - moved toward Sodom and lived outside; looked only at the fertility of the area, without considering potential spiritual ramifications
  - was distressed by what he saw in Sodom, but yet still exposed himself to it more and more
    - resulted in inward torment
    - conscience dulled with exposure? to the point that he would offer his 2 daughters to the mob and was hesitant to leave, even when God's judgment was about to fall
    - shows the extent to which even a righteous man can get entangled by sin
- results:
  - inner torment (2 Pet 2:7-8)
  - lost wife & all possessions
  - fell into gross sin with his daughters; resulted in birth of 2 immoral nations (Moab & Ammon) that would oppose God's people

-What lessons can we learn from Lot's example? (you might also consider Galatians 6:7-8; Hebrews 12:1; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

- a man reaps what he sows (Gal 6:7-8) – Lot a prime example
- need to consciously avoid sin and live to please the Holy Spirit
- had Lot known the ultimate consequences of his choices from the start, he likely would not have gone that route
  - would probably never have envisioned himself being a leader in Sodom & unwilling to leave Sodom, even at the brink of God's judgment
  - but a series of small but bad choices over the years brought his eventually to that point → gradual drift
- sin very easily entangles; we need to throw it off that we might run with perseverance the race unhindered (Heb 12:1)
- Lot started well, but seems to have lacked perseverance
- need to be careful how we build – i.e. how we live our lives (1 Cor 3:11-15) → Lot as an example of one who had everything burned up in the fire (quite literally), though he himself was saved as one escaping from the fire

-What are some things we learn about God from Genesis 18-19? (consider also 2 Peter 2:4-9)

- God knows everything
- God is all powerful – is able to enable Sarah to have a son at age 90
- God is faithful to His promises (e.g. to Abraham & Sarah)
- God hears prayer
- God confides in those who fear Him/who are His friends
- God is patient and merciful → willing to hear Abraham out; willing to spare the city for the sake of 10 righteous people
- God is holy and just → will punish sin
  - is able to punish the wicked while preserving the righteous

### **Aliens and strangers in the world**

Lot's life illustrates the principle stated in Galatians 6:7 that a man reaps what he sows. Although Lot was a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7-8), the choices he made would result in a bitter harvest. Lot started off by joining Abram in his pilgrimage to the Promised Land. Along the way, however, he looked over towards Sodom and despite the city's reputation for wickedness, was drawn to the fertile valley around the city. Though he initially pitched his tent outside Sodom (Gen.13:12), he eventually moved into Sodom (Gen. 14:12), and even became a leader of the city, sitting at the city gate (Gen. 19:1). Though he was inwardly tormented by the evil he saw (2 Peter 2:8), his reluctance to leave even in the face of God's imminent judgment showed how much he had become attached to things that were destined to perish. In the end, Lot suffered tremendous loss, losing his wife, his home, his possessions, and even his dignity, as he was led into the heinous sin of incest. He himself was saved, but, quite literally, only as one escaping through the flames (1 Cor 3:15).

We live today in a world which in many respects is similar if not far worse than Sodom. But though we live in the world, as followers of Christ, we are not to be "of the world" (John 17:14) – not loving the things and ways of the world (1 John 2:15-17), but instead living as aliens and strangers in the world (1 Peter 2:11-12), forsaking sin that we might follow Christ. Reflect on your walk with Christ, in light of Lot's example. Have you fallen in love with the things and ways of the world? In your daily choices, what are you sowing, and what might you expect to reap from those choices?