

Genesis 19:1-38

Introduction

1. Last week, Dustin took us through Genesis 18 which setup what we are about to see today:
 - a. The Lord, along with two angels, visited Abraham at his tent near Mamre
 - b. After sharing a meal with Him, the Lord revealed that He was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness, in part to serve as an example to Abraham's future descendants, Israel (READ 89:17-22)
 - c. After hearing of the Lord's plans and knowing that He is not someone to destroy the righteous along with the wicked, Abraham—ever so cautiously—engages in a bit of negotiation with the Lord (if we want to call it that)
 - d. Ultimately, the Lord reveals He would not destroy the city of Sodom if even 10 righteous people could be found
 - e. While the Lord and Abraham were speaking, the angels proceeded toward Sodom
2. Our passage today details what took place once the angels arrived and I've broken our teaching into four sections:
 - a. It doesn't take long after the angels arrive in Sodom for the men of the city to confirm their depravity and wickedness (19:1-12)
 - b. We then see that Lot is hesitant to leave Sodom, even after being told of its pending destruction (19:13-22)
 - c. We then see God's faithfulness as He literally drags Lot and his family out of Sodom before destroying the city (19:23-29)
 - d. Finally, we'll see that even though Sodom had been destroyed, the spirit of Sodom lived on in Lot's daughters and descendants (19:30-38)

A. The men of Sodom confirmed their depravity and wickedness (Genesis 19:1-12)

1. When the two angels arrive at Sodom, they find Lot sitting in the gate (READ 19:1-3):
 - a. The city gate was an important place in the ANE:
 - 1) Prominent members of the city would gather at the city gate to conduct business and socialize
 - 2) It was a place of justice where residents would seek out judges to hear their case
 - 3) It was also the place for news and public announcements
 - 4) Some scholars (like Dustin) suggest that Lot may have been a judge, but there's not enough in the Bible to prove that
 - 5) However, he may very well have been a prominent or influential citizen, due in part to his wealth and the description of him sitting at the gate
 - b. When Lot sees the angels, he invites them to spend the night in his home:
 - 1) His bowing down to them is likely due to custom than a recognition that they are angels sent from God (he continually refers to them simply as "my lords" and thinks they are just passing through Sodom)
 - 2) Initially, the angels refuse Lot's offer and plan to spend the night in the square, but Lot persuades them to change their mind

2. It didn't take long, however, before Lot's hospitality was interrupted, and the men of Sodom confirmed what the angels came to investigate (READ 19:4-5):
 - a. It was revealed back in 18:20 that one of the reasons God and the two angels had visited Abraham was because, "**The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave**"; So, God sent the two angels to confirm (metaphorically) that this was indeed the case before He destroyed both cities for their sin and wickedness
 - b. Well, it didn't take the men and boys of Sodom long to live up to their reputation, because before Lot and his guests could retire for the night, they come banging on Lot's door demanding her turn over his guests so they could violate them sexually
3. Unfortunately, Lot's response is just as shocking and wicked as the men of the city, maybe more so (READ 19:6-8):
 - a. In the ANE, it was considered a host's responsibility to protect his guests, and he was considered culpable if he didn't; this code of ethics appears to be behind Lot's actions
 - b. Sometimes we attempt to explain the sinful behavior of a Bible character by explaining the cultural practice behind it, but in doing so we have to be careful not to exonerate them or excuse their sin in the process (e.g. the polygamy of the patriarchs and David)
 - c. What we find here in this passage is Lot attempting to honor the ANE custom of protecting his guests, but with actions that are just as equally wicked as the men of Sodom
 - d. What Lot offered to do regarding his daughters was absolutely wicked, and fortunately for his sake and that of his daughters, the angels intervened (READ 19:9-11)

B. Lot hesitated to leave Sodom, even after being warned of its pending destruction (READ Genesis 19:12-22)

1. The first three words of v. 16 tell stick out like a sore thumb (19:16): "**But he hesitated...**":
 - a. Lot had just faced an angry mob the night before that threatened to rape him and his guests
 - b. Then, he was warned by the angles—twice—about the destruction coming to the city (once in the evening and then the next morning)
 - c. But...he hesitated, and not just once but twice!
 - 1) He hesitated when the angels told him to flee the city—the angels had to literally grab him and his family by their hands and drag them outside the city walls
 - 2) Then, he hesitated a second time when they were outside the walls:
 - a) The angels said, "**Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, lest you be swept away**" (19:17)
 - b) There were five cities in the valley—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar—and all five were off limits to Lot because God was going to destroy them
 - c) However, even though he admitted that the angels had shown him favor, demonstrated God's lovingkindness to him, and even saved his life so far, he was afraid he wouldn't make it to the mountains
 - d) So, he negotiated with the angels to let him flee to Zoar, which they ultimately agreed not to destroy
2. Had it not been for the compassion of the LORD, Lot's hesitation would have resulted in his death when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah: "**for the compassion of the LORD was upon him...**" (16b):

- a. You'll notice that this statement comes right on the heels of the previous one regarding Lot's hesitation to leave Sodom; how many of us would have responded, "Okay, dude, you want to stick around; fine! You're on your own!"
- b. God is not like that, however; He has compassion on us even when we least deserve it
- c. In fact, isn't this what the Gospel is all about? Romans 5:8: **"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."**

C. The LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, but faithfully rescued Lot and his daughters (READ Genesis 19:23-29)

1. As Lot and his family approached the small town of Zoar, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah just as the angels had warned:
 - a. He rained down fire and brimstone from heaven
 - b. He utterly destroyed everything in the valley—all the cities (except Zoar where Lot had fled), all the inhabitants, and even all the plants
 - c. Abraham, who was in Mamre anywhere from 60 to 100 miles away, was able to watch the destruction, seeing the smoke rising up like a furnace
 - d. The destruction was so utterly complete that according to some of Israel's later prophets, the land remained uninhabited for at least another 1000 years

2. Unfortunately, Lot's wife disregarded the angel's warning not to look back toward Sodom as she was fleeing: **"But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt":**
 - a. We're not told here in the passage why she looked back, only that she did
 - b. Some suggest that the Hebrew word for look used here implies more than a quick glance, but rather a long gaze or even looking back longingly (as the NET); that certainly is one possibility
 - c. Some also suggest the phrase **"from behind him"** indicates she was trailing behind Lot, possibly reluctantly
 - d. While the Hebrew words and phrases here by themselves don't necessarily prove Lot's wife was looking back longingly at Sodom, or that she was reluctant to leave, Jesus' words in Luke 17 do (READ Luke 17:22-33)—He likens Lot's wife to those who when facing judgment and destruction at His second coming are more concerned with going back into their home to collect their belongings or the farmer who's more interested in his crops

3. In the midst of all the destruction, the LORD faithfully saved Lot and his daughters:
 - a. V. 29 tells us that God rescued Lot because He **"remembered Abraham"**:
 - 1) as we've seen before, for God to remember someone means that He acts on their behalf and that's what we see here
 - 2) If you remember, Abraham pleaded with God back in chapter 18 not to destroy the righteous along with the wicked in Sodom, and God agreed not to destroy the city if even 10 righteous people could be found
 - 3) However, not even 10 could be found so God destroyed the city, but before doing this He sent Lot and his family **"out of the midst of the overthrow"**

 - b. Now, lest we think God spared Lot's life purely because he was Abraham's nephew, Peter wrote that God spared his life because he was a righteous man himself (READ 2 Peter 2:6-8):
 - 1) I know what you're thinking; this doesn't seem to square with what we've learned about Lot up to this point:

- a. He selfishly took the best of the land
 - b. He chose to settle in one of the wickedest cities in all of Canaan
 - c. He did object and tried to prevent the wicked men of the city from sexually abusing the angels, but in the process offered up his own daughters to the men
- 2) But, three times Peter referred to Lot as righteous:
- a. He referred to Lot as being “**oppressed (more literally distressed or worn down) by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men**”
 - b. He wrote that Lot “**felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds**”
- 3) This is another one of those times where we have to live with the tension we find in the Scriptures (just as we do with David who committed adultery and murder, yet was a man after God’s own heart)

D. Even though Sodom had been destroyed, the spirit of Sodom lived on in Lot’s daughters and descendants (READ Genesis 19:30-38)

1. There is so much irony in these verses:
 - a. Lot fled Zoar out of fear, presumably to avoid the wickedness there, only to fall prey to his own daughters’ wickedness (Zoar was no different than Sodom and was one of the cities in the valley that was originally to be destroyed)
 - b. Back in Sodom, Lot offered his daughters up to be sexually abused, and here he was sexually abused by them
 - c. And, maybe the most ironic thing of all is that Lot is totally oblivious to what happened to him—not once but TWICE!
2. It’s clear from these verses that his daughters had been taken out of the city, but the city hadn’t been taken out of the girls so the wickedness and sin of Sodom continued to live on in Lot’s daughters
3. This is also true of Lot’s descendants:
 - a. The oldest daughter named her son, Moab, which is a play on the word for father meaning “he is of my father”; he became the father of the Moabites
 - b. The younger daughter named her son, Ben-Ammi, which is also a play on words; the word “am” refers to people but also kinsman (relative) so Ben-Ammi could mean son of my nearest kinsman (e.g. her father, Lot); he became the father of the Ammonites
 - c. Both the Moabites and the Ammonites became the enemies of Israel and are described in the Bible as idolatrous and sexually immoral

Conclusion

I believe there are at least three things we can take away from this passage:

1. The first takeaway is that God judges wickedness:
 - a. This is a bit of a no-brainer because the Bible makes it clear that God judges sin

- b. It may not always be right here in this life, and the wicked often seem to get away with their sin without punishment, but ultimately the wicked will stand before God and give an account of their deeds (READ Revelation 20:11-15)

- 2. A second takeaway is that God is merciful and just and does not destroy the righteous along with the wicked:
 - a. Abraham declared this about God when he said, **“Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not Judge of all the earth deal justly?”** (Genesis 18:25)
 - b. Moses declared, **“The Rock, His work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He”** (Deuteronomy 32:4)
 - c. The psalmist wrote, **“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne...”** (Psalm 89:14)
 - d. The Bible’s promise that God is just and will not punish and destroy the righteous along with the wicked is the foundation of the Gospel; it’s what provides us with hope!
 - 1) If God simply left it up to us to be judged according to our own deeds, we’d all be doomed because we’re all sinners; we’re all wicked and would be judged accordingly
 - 2) But, because Jesus Christ is righteous, and because He came as a human, was crucified for our sin, and rose from the dead, His righteousness is attributed to us when we place our faith and trust in Him
 - 3) As a result, we are declared righteous because of Christ and no longer face the condemnation of the wicked
 - 4) READ Romans 3:21-26

- 3. A third takeaway is that it’s easy to get attached to the world, and difficult to leave it behind:
 - a. In spite of being a righteous man, and being disturbed and worn down by the wickedness in Sodom (as Peter wrote), Lot apparently still liked living in Sodom, so much so that he hesitated to leave; he literally had to be dragged out of the city by the angels
 - b. After being taken outside the city, Lot’s wife lagged behind him as she ran, gazing back at the city, and as Jesus indicated longed for what she was leaving behind
 - c. Even after leaving the wickedness of Sodom and Zoar, Lot’s daughters continued in the same spirit of wickedness of Sodom proving that even though they left the city, they didn’t leave the wickedness of the city behind
 - d. It’s like that sometimes for us as Christians as well:
 - 1) While we are to live in this world, we are not supposed to be **“of this world”** (meaning we are not to be like the world; READ John 17:6-19)
 - 2) We are also not to **“love this world”** which means to lust after the things of the world (READ 1 John 2:15-17)
 - e. Would it be nice if the moment we placed our faith in Jesus Christ we immediately stopped being like the world or loving the things of this world? But, it doesn’t work that way:
 - 1) Instead, we have to learn to put on Christ: **“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts”** (Romans 13:14)
 - 2) We have to learn to put off the old man and put on the new (Ephesians 4:22-24): **“that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the bold self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”**

- 3) We have to learn to walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-17): **“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh ¹sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”**