

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 18:20-33; 19:1-29.

LESSON 10 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 18:20-33.

²⁰ And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

²¹ I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

²² And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

²³ And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

²⁴ Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

²⁵ That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

²⁶ And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

²⁷ And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:

²⁸ Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

²⁹ And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

³⁰ And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be

NOTES:

Sin Judged

God is a holy God, and He created man to be holy. He made the earth clean and beautiful, and there was happiness in the world.

But sin brought unhappiness. Sin brought sickness and all kinds of misery. The nature of man became corrupt. From the time of Adam's fall, that corrupt nature has been manifested. Even a small child will show signs of anger; and the older a person grows, the more he shows the sinfulness of his nature if he does not give his heart to Jesus. But God hates sin.

Again and again God sent judgement upon Israel when they sinned. Every sin that is ever committed, if it is not repented of, will bring condemnation and severe punishment. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished" (II Peter 2:9).

Sodom's Sins

The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were terrible. They began with "pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness . . . neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy" (Ezekiel 16:49). Perhaps to us those do not sound like very serious sins, but they led to greater evils. Idle hands get into mischief. God wants His children to serve Him diligently, and not waste their time. The devil can work among those who are gluttons and who are too proud to listen to good advice. Those who are proud are also selfish, and have no heart to help those who need help. Those sins of Sodom led to other sins; and God said of those people, "They were haughty, and committed abomination before me" (Ezekiel 16:50).

People seldom think that they are committing their terrible sins in the sight of God. In fact, many people try to hide their blacker sins from their friends. But God sees them all. "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 2:2). "For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

God's Mercy

When God saw the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, He decided to destroy them. But first He told His friend Abraham about it. Abraham's nephew, Lot, was living down there, so Abraham was particularly interested in the fate of the cities.

Lot was in Sodom by his own choice, having chosen to take the well-watered plain of Jordan, and leaving the rocky hills for his old uncle. But Abraham still loved him, and prayed to God to spare the city for the sake of the righteous. Would God spare the city for fifty righteous people there? God answered: "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city then I will spare all the place for their sakes." But then Abraham feared there might not be that many. Would God spare it for forty, or for thirty or even ten? Yes, God promised to spare the city for ten righteous. But there were not ten.

The Angels' Visit

Two angels came into the city of Sodom to visit Lot, but they came in the form of men, and Lot did not know they were angels. He was sitting in the gate of the city, where he seemed to try to give some righteous judgement to the wicked people among whom he lived. The Apostle Peter tells us that he was vexed by the filthy

found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

³¹ And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

³² And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

³³ And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Genesis 19:1-29.

¹ And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

² And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

³ And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

⁵ And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

⁶ And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

⁷ And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

⁸ Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do

conversation and unlawful deeds of the sinners among whom he lived. He no doubt tried to hold a little standard of decency among them, but they refused to listen to him.

When Lot saw the angels enter the city, he bowed low before them. He could see that they were godly men, and not corrupted with the sins of Sodom. He invited them into his home, offering them all the hospitality he had to give. The angels politely refused at first, but when Lot insisted they went with him to stay all night.

The writer of Hebrews told the Hebrew Christians: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). That applied to Lot. He did not know, when he invited these men into his home, that they were the angels of God who had come to take him out of the city before it was destroyed.

When the wicked men of the city found that Lot was entertaining these good men, they wished to harm them. They made a wild clamour at Lot's door, insisting that the men come out. But the angels pulled Lot back into the house, and struck all the evil men, small and great, with blindness, so they could not find the door. It seemed all classes of people in Sodom were extremely wicked -- the small and great, rich and poor, old and young. Surely they deserved judgement.

Warnings Unheeded

The angels sent Lot to the home of his married daughters to warn them that judgement was coming and that they should flee for their lives. "But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law."

Judgement is going to come upon the world someday soon, and the true Christians today are trying to warn people to flee from sin, and find refuge in the Blood of Jesus. Anyone can be saved from judgement if he repents of his sins and asks Jesus to forgive him.

But to most people, the warning against coming judgement is as it was to the people of Sodom, a foolish tale. They are saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Peter 3:4). But Peter tells us that God is not slack concerning His promises, and His Word will be fulfilled. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:9, 10).

Lot's sons-in-law, who thought he was mocking them, stayed in the city with their wives and were burned up.

A Beautiful Morning

When morning came, the angels hurried Lot, saying, "Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city." Still Lot did not seem to be in any hurry to leave. He had never seen fire and brimstone rain from Heaven before; why should he be excited now? But it was coming, and if the angels had not taken hold of his hand and pulled him out, he would have been destroyed with the wicked. It was only the mercy of God that he escaped with his life.

May we keep our hearts open to the warnings of the Word of God. God's Word is sure, and at any moment the Lord may call Home those who are looking for His coming. May we ever watch and expect His coming, so that we will not be left to go through the Great Tribulation.

The angels told Lot to flee to the mountains and get far from the scene of disaster, but Lot wanted rather to go into a small town called Zoar. The angels again were merciful to him and let him have his way.

When Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen and it seemed like a

nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

⁹ And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.

¹⁰ But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

¹¹ And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

¹² And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

¹³ For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

¹⁴ And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

¹⁵ And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

¹⁶ And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

¹⁷ And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

¹⁸ And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:

¹⁹ Behold now, thy servant hath found

beautiful day. There were no ominous clouds, nor any peculiar darkness. There were no signs of coming disaster. It looked like any other day. But suddenly it began to rain upon Sodom and Gomorrah -- and it was not water. Fire and brimstone came pouring down in clouds of smoke, and the cities and their inhabitants, with all the vegetation, were destroyed. Nothing remained alive. It is believed that the Dead Sea covers the place where those cities once stood, and there have never even been any living creatures in that sea. God's judgement was final on Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Pillar of Salt

The angels had warned Lot and his family not to look back, but Lot's wife was not obedient. She had many friends among those wicked people. Perhaps, too, she was thinking of her disobedient children who had been left behind. So she looked back, and became a pillar of salt. The story was told many years later, and at the time of the telling, that pillar was still there, a reminder of judgement upon the disobedient.

A greater judgement than came upon Sodom and Gomorrah is coming upon people who refuse the teachings of Jesus. Jesus said that if the people of those cities had seen the mighty works, which He did in Capernaum, they would have repented and not have been destroyed. If God destroyed those wicked people who had not heard the preaching of Jesus, how much more worthy of punishment are those who do hear it and refuse to heed? Today we all have the opportunity of hearing the preaching of Jesus. May we obey and line our lives to His Word, and escape all the judgement that God is going to pour out upon the Christ-rejecters. He will call His people Home, above all the distress and anguish that will come upon this old world.

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Sodom going to be destroyed?
2. Who lived in Sodom? How was he related to Abraham?
3. What was Abraham's prayer to God when he heard the city was to be destroyed?
4. How did Lot treat the angels who came to Sodom?
5. What does the Apostle Paul tell about hospitality?
5. How did Lot's sons-in-law receive the message of judgement?
6. What happened to them?
7. What happened to Lot's wife?
8. What kind of day was it when judgement came?
9. What was the judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah?

grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

²⁰ Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. ²¹ And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

²² Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

²³ The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

²⁵ And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

²⁶ But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷ And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:

²⁸ And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

²⁹ And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.