

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

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

LESSON 10 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished" (1 Peter 2:9).

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

Bible References:

I Prevailing Prayer

1. God heard the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their grievous sins, Genesis 18:20, 21.
2. Abraham petitioned God to spare Sodom from destruction if there were ten righteous in the city, Genesis 18:22-33;

Exodus 32:30-32;

30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

II Samuel 24:16,17;

16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

Romans 9:1-3;

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Romans 10:1.

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

3. God answered Abraham's prayer, Genesis 19:29.

II Deliverance of Lot

1. Lot welcomed the angels of God to his home when they came to Sodom, Genesis 19:1-3;

Hebrews 13:1, 2;

1 Let brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Luke 24:28-31.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

2. The men of the city sought to do injury to Lot's guests but were supernaturally prevented, Genesis 19:4-11;

II Kings 6:18.

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 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

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

3. Lot's warnings to his household were ridiculed, Genesis 19:12-14;

II Peter 3:3, 4;

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And 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.

Matthew 24:42-51;

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I Thessalonians 4:8.

8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

4. The deliverance of Lot and two of his daughters by divine intervention is typical of the deliverance of the saints of God in the Rapture from the Great Tribulation, Genesis 19:15-17;

Matthew 24:40, 41;

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

I Thessalonians 5:1-9.

1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

III Wrath of God

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 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

1. Lot begged and received permission to take refuge in a small city of the plain, Genesis 19:18-23.

2. Judgement was suspended until the righteous were safe, Genesis 19:22;
Isaiah 26:20.

20 ¶ Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

3. God destroyed the cities of the plain -- punishment typical of all God's judgements upon sin and sinners, Genesis 19:24-29,

II Peter 2:4-10;

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

Jude 5-7, 15;

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Revelation 6:17.

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

4. Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt, Genesis 19:17, 26;

Luke 17:28-37.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32 Remember Lot's wife.

33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

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 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

35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

Notes:

Power of Prayer

Abraham's righteousness caused God to inform him of the destruction that was soon to fall upon Sodom and Gomorrah. It was in Sodom that Abraham's nephew, Lot, had his home. The terrible wickedness of the citizens of the cities of plain had so provoked God that He was about to destroy them from the face of the earth. (See **Ezekiel 16:49, 50**; 49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.) Abraham was alarmed at such news, and immediately began to intercede with the Lord to spare the city of Sodom. The Lord agreed to spare the city if there were found fifty righteous in it. Abraham must have been well informed as to the wickedness of the citizens of that city because he persisted in his intercession for the city until the Lord agreed that the city would be spared if there were but ten righteous found in it.

It should be a matter of great encouragement to all men who pray to the living God to know that often the judgements of God can be delayed, and even prevented, by the prevailing prayers of one righteous man of God. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). God alone knows the number of men and women who through the centuries, have been spared from death and the pangs of hell because of the prayers of someone who loved them enough to prevail with God to spare their lives and their souls until they would repent of their sins. Unfortunately for Sodom and the cities of the plain, despite the prayers of Abraham, there were not found in Sodom even ten righteous; and so the judgement of God came upon them with all its fury.

Messengers of Opportunity

Two angels were sent to Sodom by the Lord, to determine, perhaps, Lot's status in the city of Sodom and to rescue him from the coming destruction. Lot, being in the gate of the city, perceived they were strangers and invited them to stay with him. It was well for Lot that he showed such godly courtesy to strangers. He did not know they were the angels of God, did not know of the destruction that was about to fall upon the city, and that they were there for that purpose; but his courtesy and hospitality reaped great dividends that night.

Undoubtedly the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews had this incident in mind when he counselled the Hebrew Christians to "let brotherly love continue," and not to be forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (Hebrews 13:1, 2). The Scriptures state that it was because of Abraham's prayers that Lot was rescued from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (See **Genesis 19:29**; 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.) But Lot could have ignored the angels of God, refused, as did Lot's own son-in-law, to listen to the warning to flee, and have perished despite the escape that was offered him.

Way of Escape

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.

Although the prayers of the righteous will often prevent for many years the certain judgements of God from being carried out, the day of reckoning will finally come. If the way of escape is ignored, then nothing is left but to suffer the righteous anger of God. There are too many men and women who have been reared under the guidance of godly fathers and mothers and have grown into adults without availing themselves of the salvation of Christ they have been taught since their youth. Oftentimes they will say that their parents' prayers will avail for them and that is sufficient. No parent's prayers can save anyone. Those prayers can force men into a decision for or against God's salvation; those prayers can and do hold off the day of reckoning for a season; those prayers will prevail with God as did Abraham's for his nephew Lot; but Lot could have lost his life and soul, nevertheless, if he had not fled with the angels of God who came for him.

The Blood of Christ, which washes away the sins of the soul is the means that God has provided for mankind to escape the judgements that God is soon to send upon the world. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:9). Noah's escape from the Flood, in the ark he built at the Lord's direction and guidance; the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and their protection from the plagues and death that swept Egypt; and the deliverance of Lot from Sodom -- are all typical of the salvation of the righteous from the final judgement that will come upon the world and all sin. Jesus warned His listeners of these things, testified to them of the wickedness of the people of the days of Noah and Lot, and promised them a like ending if they did not repent of their sins.

In the final consummation of all things, Jesus shall return and catch away His own people to Himself. The righteous dead shall be raised to eternal life, and the living saints shall be caught up with them to meet Christ in the air; but the wicked dead shall not live again for a thousand years. (Read **Revelation 20:5, 6**; 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.)

Remember Lot's Wife

Lot escaped Sodom with his life, but he had to leave all his earthly possessions behind him. The true believer in Christ has the treasures of his heart where thieves cannot break in and steal away, and where moths and rust do not corrupt. (Read **Matthew 6: 20**; 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.)

Although Lot was a righteous man, he had his possessions in Sodom; and they were lost with the destruction of the city. Abraham, his godly uncle, had chosen the better part, and had placed the keeping of his treasures with the Lord. Abraham had chosen the things of God, spiritual things, for his treasures, and they are still in his possession to this very day. (See **John 4:36**; 36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.) He is reaping wages unto eternal life, whereas Lot had his works burned up by fire, and he himself barely escaped destruction. (Read **I Corinthians 3:10-15**; 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of

what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.)

Lot and his family were warned by the angels to flee the plain, and not to look back. Lot's wife stopped in her flight to gaze back at the city from which they were fleeing, and she turned into a pillar of salt. Her treasures were still in the city and when she did not restrain herself from looking back, the judgement of God struck her. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).

When once a person has been delivered from sin, there should never be a "looking back" to the old life, because that would be sin. Jesus solemnly warned His listeners of the judgement that would come upon the earth; and then used the fate of Lot's wife, who looked back, as a warning to those who would so foolishly tarry in the face of certain disaster, and not make their heavenly calling and election sure. At another time Jesus advised His listeners that "no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Peter in like manner warned of the danger of looking back to the old life of sin. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (II Peter 2:20, 21). Thus Lot's wife who looked back to Sodom lost her opportunity of escape, and paid with her life and soul, and has been ever since a symbol of the folly of backsliding.

"Remember Lot's wife."

QUESTIONS

1. How did Abraham learn that Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed?
2. Why was Abraham concerned about his nephew Lot?
3. What did he do to insure Lot's safety?
4. What was the business of the two angels in Sodom?
5. Why did Lot take the two angels home with him?
6. Why did Lot's sons-in-law not believe Lot's warning?
7. In what manner is Lot's escape from Sodom typical of the Rapture of the saints?
8. Why did Lot's wife look back?
9. What happened to Lot's wife?
10. Why did Jesus tell His listeners to remember Lot's wife?