

Destruction in the Valley

Genesis 19

Destroyed by Sin

Genesis 19:1-14

Presence of the Angels: Genesis 19:1-3

They Met Lot at the Gate

While the LORD conversed with Abraham, the two angels continued towards Sodom, where they found Lot sitting at the gate. Entrances to ancient cities served as centers of business and commercial dealings, and where civic decisions were made. Seated at the gate, it appears Lot was involved with the affairs of Sodom as a judge or magistrate (Genesis 19:9). This may appear to be a good thing, but it actually displays the extent of his compromise. Lot's decline into the world was gradual. It began with pitching his tent towards Sodom and did not end until he lived in the city amongst the wicked inhabitants. Lot is the image of our modern day Christian – they belong to God, live for the world, and are afraid to stand against sin. So, they compromise and gradually become like the people of the world.

It was in the evening, the sun might have been down or on its way, when the angels arrived in Sodom. Lot immediately greeted them with kindness. Perhaps he noticed something different with these men, or being a righteous man, Lot treated all travelers with generosity. Sadly, the angels had already found the one good man in Sodom. The rest were overcome with sin and wickedness.

They Went to Lot's Home

Lot cordially invited them to his house as his guests. He planned for them to remain throughout the night and leave early in the morning. The angels refused his request but Lot persisted until they agreed to go with him. Lot understood the dangers of staying out at night in a city like Sodom. Instead, he treated the angels with great hospitality, providing a place of rest and making a feast for them to eat.

Presence of Wickedness: Genesis 19:4-14

Sinful Actions Manifested

It did not take long for the residents of Sodom to surround Lot's house. They gathered, like a mob, and called upon Lot to deliver his guests unto them. The wickedness was complete, both old and young from every quarter were involved. Their sin was so vile we are given no description of it, but Jude tells us they were guilty of going after strange flesh, that which is unnatural (Jude 1:7). The sin would bear the name of the city it destroyed, Sodomy. The sin was forbidden and punishable by death, according to the law (Leviticus 18:22-23, 20:13-16). It is vile, unnatural, and those that live in this sin will not inherit the kingdom of God (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Timothy 1:10; 1 Corinthians 6:9). People can change the name of it, nations can make laws to support it, and churches can even compromise to accept it, but

it will always be offensive to God. The vicious mob wanted the two men delivered unto them, obviously to gratify their gross desires (Judges 19:22-28). They were not ashamed of their wickedness and forced it upon others. The Sodomites were bold, and brash sinners, arrogantly defying God and His ways. This passage displays human depravity at it's lowest.

Lot stepped outside his home and addressed the angry mob in an attempt to put an end to the trouble. He spoke politely and offered two solutions.

1. *He encouraged them to leave* – he reasoned that the two men were his guests under his protection.
2. *He offered his daughters* – it was a foolish offer made out of fear. This would place his daughters in harms way and solve nothing.

Lot discovered there is no reasoning with a person ruled by their lust and passion. They will go to any lengths to have their way and gratify their flesh. Obstacles prohibiting them will be removed. The crowd turned their anger towards Lot. He was accepted as long as he did not interfere with their filthy living, but when he obstructed their wicked desires, he became their enemy. They threatened to harm Lot and pushed so hard against him that the door was about to break. They hated the message, so they attacked the messenger. The sin in Sodom had escalated out of control, what was once practiced in private, found acceptance, and then ruled the city. They gained their right to live immorally and any opposition resulted in a riot.

The LORD'S angels protected Lot, rapidly pulling him into the house and shutting the door behind him. They smote the wicked people with blindness, causing confusion and ending the threat against Lot's home. This blindness did not stop the stubborn sinners from seeking their corrupt desires; they continued to look for the door but were unable to locate it. It became clear the city was filled with wickedness and ripe for judgment. The city reeked of sin. Today, there are nations and cities like Sodom, where sin dominates.

Sinful Attitude Manifested

Lot was informed of the coming judgment. Sodom and the cities in the valley were to be destroyed because of their wickedness. Lot was directed to quickly find his family members in order to save them. If any were to be spared, they had to accompany the angels out of the city. If they refused, they would suffer in the destruction.

Lot courageously went out into the dark streets of Sodom, dodging the vile blinded sinners he ran from house to house warning his family of the coming judgment and pleading for their safety. His sons in law listened but did not believe, they thought him to be mocking or joking. Evidently Lot did not speak to his sons or was unable to reach them. Lot's family was like many in our world today. They were not involved in the grossest sins but did not see a problem with them either. By their actions, they believed judgment would not come upon the city. Today many believe God does not exist, sin is not an issue, and judgment of sinners will never occur, but they are greatly mistaken (Hebrews 9:27). Lot returned to his house alone, maybe with tear-filled eyes and a broken heart. Perhaps, if Lot had lived

like a righteous man, he would have been heard and taken seriously. He led nobody to God by living according to the world's standards. Today, churches are compromising with the world and successfully filling their buildings while people remain unchanged and in their sin. Mimicking the world does not produce sound Christians but worldly church members.

Destroyed by Fire *Genesis 19:15-29*

Safety of Lot: Genesis 19:15-23

Lot Removed from the City

Early that morning the angels directed Lot to leave the city. The destruction was certain and nothing would prevent it from coming, the matter was settled. Lot was to leave immediately with his wife and two daughters. With God's judgment at the door, Lot took his time and delayed his departure. He was leaving everything he held dear, much of his family, his friends, and his earthly possessions. He may not have cared for the sin but he enjoyed the comfortable life Sodom provided. This stubborn believer deserved to perish in the city he lingered in, but God being merciful removed him (Psalm 86:15). The LORD is good to those that belong Him (2 Peter 2:7).

Lot Directed to the Mountain

Lot was given express orders; he was to make haste for the mountain in order to escape the destruction. This probably refers to the mountainous region of Moab. Acting quickly with obedience, he was to move forward without turning aside or even looking back. Likewise, believers should never return to their old sinful ways, because sin produces destruction (James 1:14-15). Instead, believers are encouraged to remain with God and walk with Him (John 15:1-4).

Lot refused to go to the mountain and begged for permission to enter a nearby small city. Lot feared for his life, or so he said. It was foolish to believe his choice was better than God's direction or to believe God would not provide protection after rescuing him from the destruction of Sodom. Lot was so caught up in the world, that obedience and faith seemed strange to him. But that is how Lot arrived in Sodom to begin with, living after his selfish desires (Genesis 13:10). He was permitted to enter Zoar and by the time he arrived the sun had risen above the land. All seemed fine in Sodom, that's because judgment would not come upon the city until Lot was safe. The LORD will not punish the righteous with the wicked.

Sudden Destruction: Genesis 19:24-29

The Cities Consumed

Judgment came swift. As the sun shone brightly that morning and the activities of the day were under way, the cities were suddenly overcome by fire and brimstone. It happened rapidly and nobody escaped. This terrible storm came from the LORD, it was not by chance or accident but for a purpose, judgment of sin. The cities were completely destroyed, all of the inhabitants slain, and everything that

grew upon the ground was wiped out. It must be remembered that God Almighty controls this world, including its weather (Matthew 8:27).

How did this occur? Some believe it was completely different than anything ever seen, many that it was due to volcanic activity, and others think it was the combination of an earthquake and intense lightning storm. Any of those situations would have been possible under the LORD'S direction. The judgment produced utter ruin and the area has never recovered. The once fruitful valley is now home to the Dead Sea, where no living thing is to be found. This valley remains a monument to sin and punishment.

1. *It is a reminder* – for other ungodly nations facing God's wrath (Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 49:17-18; Zephaniah 2:9).
2. *It is an example* – for those that refuse God and live in sin (2 Peter 2:6; Matthew 10:15).

The LORD'S judgment was swift and efficient. Those that oppose God will suffer the same fate as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Destruction Witnessed

Lot's wife looked back, which implies looking upon something with pleasure, care, or favor. Lot's wife did more than glance over her shoulder; she purposely stopped to gaze upon the city. It says she remained behind and was no longer with Lot and her daughters. Evidently, they continued through the plain while she halted to look upon the city, perhaps thinking of returning. She lingered or delayed in her retreat and suffered the consequence. Lot's wife died instantly, her body being turned into a pillar of salt, perhaps overcome by the ash or debris from the sudden destruction. Her lingering and punishment serve as a reminder to the righteous (Luke 17:32-33). Many believers resemble Lot's wife, they belong to God but struggle to separate from the world.

That morning, Abraham returned to where he previously talked to the LORD. The location probably overlooked the cities in the valley. As the sun shone brightly, he peered over the horizon and a terrible sight greeted his eyes. The smoke from the destruction went up like smoke from a furnace. The entire valley burned and smoldered from the brimstone and fire. It was probably clear to Abraham that everything in the area was gone. The destruction was great and it may have saddened his heart. The fact that Abraham's prayers were answered must not be overlooked. The LORD destroyed the cities because ten righteous people were not found, but the righteous ones were spared.

Destroyed by Indiscretion
Genesis 19:30-38

Overcome with Fear: Genesis 19:30

Lot Left Zoar

Instead of remaining in the city he begged to dwell in, Lot went to the mountain. He was afraid to dwell in Zoar; this may have been due to numerous reasons. Perhaps his conscience bothered him, knowing he chose to dwell in Zoar instead of following God's direction. Maybe, the inhabitants despised him because his family was the sole survivors. It might have been practical reasons, due to the changing of the valley with the rising of the Dead Sea. Lot's life was changed and would never be the same, though he did not participate in the sins of Sodom he was forever affected by them. It is best to completely separate from the world and its wickedness (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Lot Dwelt in a Cave

Lot took his two daughters and lived in a cave. The large herds, fertile fields, and nice home were gone. Lot put his trust in the uncertain riches of the world and lost nearly everything (1 John 2:15-17). This once prosperous man was resigned to living in a mountain. Why he did not go to Abraham is unknown, perhaps pride or stubbornness kept him from seeking Abraham's assistance.

Overcome with Wine: *Genesis 19:31-38*

Lot's Deception

His daughters gave him wine to drink and he became drunk. Drunkenness is a sin that paves the way for more sins, such as fornication, adultery, violence, and murder. Many actions have been committed under the influence of alcohol that would never have been thought of when sober (Ephesians 5:18).

His daughters did this in order to commit an awful sin with him. These young women looked at their surroundings and devised a plan based upon their worldly thinking.

1. *Influenced by their time in Sodom* – being educated in its schools and friends with its worldly residents.
2. *Influenced by their parents* – having a father that never lived by faith and a mother that loved the world.
3. *Influenced by their situation* – dwelling in a cave and believing no man would dare marry them.

It was a wicked and deceitful plot. Some have attempted to justify their actions, but it was sin. After witnessing God's judgment upon sinners, they proceeded with their immoral plan.

Lot's Descendants

Lot's daughters each gave birth to a boy, Moab and Benammi. Their descendants remained in the area and frequently fought against the Israelites.

1. *Moab* - His descendants were the Moabites. Ruth was a Moabite and became the wife of Boaz.

2. *Benammi* - His descendants were the Ammonites. Naamah, one of Solomon's wives, was an Ammonite and mother to King Rehoboam.

This is the last mention of Lot in the scriptures. This righteous man lost everything due to his foolish decisions. Sadly, the last image of him is as a drunkard living in a cave.

Conclusion

Sin is a serious matter to the LORD. The wicked inhabitants of Sodom rejected God and His ways, choosing to live in perversion they were overcome with fire. Lot, though he escaped judgment, suffered due to compromise. Today, God's view of sin has not changed. He remains holy and will judge sinners. The LORD will punish the wicked and be merciful to the righteous. The Dead Sea serves as a constant reminder that *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:31*

Point to Ponder

The wicked inhabitants of Sodom were unable to escape the LORD'S judgment.

Quote

"Men have come to regard the earth as their own domain, and to resent the thought of Divine interference in their affairs." Robert Anderson

Questions

How did Lot compromise?

Why was judgment sent?

What is a lesson learned from the example of Lot's wife?

How does the Dead Sea remain a monument to sin and punishment?

What new truth have you learned from this lesson?