

ABRAHAM, LOT AND SODOM

Genesis 18:16 - 19:27

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Angels, Abraham, and Lot

Key-location: Canaan

Key-repetitions:

- Abraham repeatedly bargained with God so that God would spare the city of Sodom (Gen 18:16-33).

Key-attitudes:

- Positive attitude toward Abraham.
- Abraham's concern for Lot and Sodom.
- Lot's concern for the angels who looked like men.
- Lot's reluctance to leave the comforts of Sodom.

Initial-situation:

On one occasion, God, with two angels who looked like men, appeared to Abraham. The Lord told Abraham, "I will return to you next year at this time, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Initial-problem:

The Lord and the angels who looked like men got up to leave. They looked down toward Sodom.

Final-situation:

The Lord rained down burning sulfur upon Sodom. God eliminated all life on the Jordan Valley: people, plants and animals alike. Only Lot and his two daughters escaped.

BIBLE STORY

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom

The Lord and the angels who looked like men got up to leave. Abraham walked with them. They looked down toward Sodom.

The Lord told Abraham, "The cries of the victims in Sodom and Gomorrah are deafening; the people there are evil. I'll go down and see if they are as bad as I've heard."

The two angels who looked like men went on toward Sodom, but Abraham stood in the Lord's path, blocking his way. Abraham asked, "Will you kill the good people along with the wicked? What if there are fifty good people in the city? Won't you spare the place for the sake of the fifty good people in it? Far be it for you to kill the good with the wicked."

The Lord promised, "If I find fifty good people in the city of Sodom, I'll spare the entire city for their sake."

Abraham spoke up again, "What if the fifty fall short by five? Will you destroy the whole city because of the missing five?"

The Lord answered, "If I find forty-five there, I won't destroy it."

Abraham once again spoke, "What if only forty good people are found there?"

The Lord answered, "For the sake of forty, I won't do it."

Abraham decreased the number to thirty, then to twenty.

Then Abraham said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten good people can be found there?"

The Lord answered, "For the sake of the ten, I won't destroy it."

The Lord finished speaking with Abraham and left. Abraham returned home (Gen 18:16-33).

Destruction of Sodom; Salvation of Lot

The two angels, who had the appearance of men, arrived at Sodom in the evening. Lot was sitting by the gate to the city. He got up, bowed down, and invited them, "Gentlemen, please come to my house to spend the night. You can wash your feet, sleep, and then go on your way in the morning." Lot prepared a meal for them. Before they had gone to bed, all the men from the city of Sodom surrounded the house. They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."

Lot went outside, closed the door behind him and said, "No, my friends. Please, don't do this wicked thing. These men are my guests under the protection of my roof. I must protect them."

They replied, "Get lost! You came here as a stranger and now you play the judge!" They moved forward to break down the door.

The angels pulled Lot back into the house, shut the door and temporarily blinded the men of Sodom. The angels told Lot, "The outcry to the Lord against this place is so loud that the Lord sent us to destroy it."

Lot went out and warned his sons-in-law, who were engaged to his daughters. But his sons-in-law thought Lot was joking.

At the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Quick! Take your wife and your two daughters, or you will be destroyed when the city is punished."

Lot hesitated to leave. The angels took Lot, his wife, and his two daughters' hands and led them safely outside of the city. As soon as they were outside, one of the angels said, "Run for your lives! Don't look back. Flee to the mountains or you will be destroyed!"

But Lot replied, "Oh, no. Please! You have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't run as far as the mountains; the disaster will catch me and I'll die. Look, there is a small town nearby. Let me flee to it. Then my life will be spared."

The angel replied, "Very well. We agree not to destroy that town. But flee quickly, because I can't do anything until you reach it."

Lot reached the town when the sun was rising. Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur upon Sodom and Gomorrah. He eliminated all life on the Jordan Valley: people, plants and animals alike.

But, Lot's wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt (Gen 19:1-27).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When God said he was going to visit the wicked city of Sodom, what was Abraham's reaction?
2. What does Abraham's dialogue with God teach us about how we should pray?
3. When Lot separated from Abraham, what attracted Lot to live in Sodom?
4. How did Lot react to the angels' warning of coming destruction to Sodom?
5. What did it cost Lot to settle in Sodom?
6. What could it cost us if we compromise with worldly pleasure for personal gain?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **In prayer, a person tells God what he wants, then he accepts the answer God gives him.** Abraham made his request to spare the city of Sodom if there were fifty righteous persons there. He continued his dialogue with God and reduced the number from fifty to ten. However, God's answer came from God's perspective and was not in harmony with Abraham's desires (Gen 18:23-33).
2. **God's judgment on wicked people comes suddenly and unexpectedly.** The people of Sodom were involved in normal activities of life when unexpected destruction came as a judgment during the time of Lot (Gen 19:23). Jesus referred to Lot to illustrate how God will interrupt normal human affairs at the return of Jesus (Luke 17:28-29).
3. **Closely associating with sinners in order to have personal gain can be costly.** Abraham and Lot's animals grew too many for the two to travel together. Abraham gave Lot first choice. Lot chose the prosperous plains of the Jordan River valley. Eventually Lot moved to wicked Sodom where he would have riches and luxury (Gen 13:10-13). By settling in Sodom, Lot lost his power to influence family members, and also he lost his possessions and his wife (Gen 19:1-15).
4. **The practice of having sexual relations with the same sex is abominable to God** (Lv 18:22; 20:13; Rm 1:27, 31-32). The men of Sodom wanted to sexually abuse the angels who, in the form of men, visited Sodom (Gen 19:4-9). God

destroyed the city. The practice of having sexual relations with the same sex is often called sodomy because of the city of Sodom.

5. **God's mercy saves sinners from divine punishment.** Lot and his daughters were saved from the destruction of Sodom because of God's mercy (Gen 19:14). Eternal salvation is also the result of God's mercy (Eph 2:8-9).
6. **The person who is experiencing God's salvation and chooses to disobey clear commands from God will be punished.** God was saving Lot's family from the destruction of Sodom. The angels told Lot's family to run for their lives and to not look back. Lot's wife disobeyed God's command and looked back; she became a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Interaction with Characters in Story:

Invite listeners to interact with characters in the story with a question. What would you like to say:

- To Abraham when he was praying with God for Sodom?
- To the men of Sodom who wanted to have sex with the angels, who looked like men?
- To Lot's sons-in-law who thought Lot was joking when he told them to flee the city?
- To Lot's wife when she wanted to look back toward Sodom?