

Genesis Chapter 19 – John Karmelich

1. Let's start with a quote by Jesus. That's always a good thing to do in a Christian bible study! ☺
 - a) "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (Luke 16:13 NIV)
 - b) Jesus point is that everybody "serves" somebody. Everybody has some sort of "god" in your life. If your "god" is money, then your primary concern in life is making money. Even for a Christian, there are times in life when we are worried about money and worried about where the money is going to come from. At that one particular moment, we are making "money" our god-of-the moment. Worry is the opposite of faith.
 - c) I use this as my introduction because today we are focusing on the town of Sodom in Genesis 19. It is a town in which other-than-Lot, nobody serves the God of the Bible.
2. Have you ever wondered what is the ultimate end of a town in which nobody serves the God of the bible? Sodom is just such an example. Much of this chapter is about Sodom's destruction.
 - a) Even if it is a culture where they never heard of God, He built into mankind an instinctive knowledge to know what is right.
 - b) Man instinctively knows it is wrong to kill, wrong to steal. Further, every culture in the world has a one-man, one-woman family structure as the basic foundation of the family. Even in places where they never heard of Judaism or Christianity, that knowledge is instinctive.
 - i) "For the truth about God is known to them (all unbelievers) instinctively; God has put this knowledge in their hearts." (Romans 1:19 TLB)
 - c) Sodom is recorded as the first specific place in the bible where they willfully ignored the instinctively knowledge of right and wrong. Just as one can grow in their maturity in their relationship with God, so one can also grow "the wrong way". You can get to a "point-of-no-return", which is what happened to Sodom.
 - d) I see the destruction of Sodom as a "mercy-killing" more than a judgment. If ever a group of people get to a point like those in Sodom, not only is God destroying that town for judgment's sake (of the innocent), but also because it gets to the point where a town like Sodom is "incurably" wicked and there is no repentance possible.
 - e) "Sodom" can also be an example of a person who spends their entire life turning away from God. One can get to "a point of no return" in their life. God essentially says to that person (or that town), "If that's the way you want to live, fine. I'm giving you the free will to live that way, if for no other reason, to be an example to others of how bad it is. In fact, I'm going to change you so that it will be impossible for you to repent."
 - i) I believe there is a "point of no return". I'm not sovereign God, so I don't know what and when that point is, I just know it exists and I've seen it personally. I still pray for people who I suspect are at that point because I am not God, and I don't know people's hearts.
 - ii) Here is a description of "Sodom" in one verse: "So God let them go ahead into every sort of sex sin, and do whatever they wanted to--yes, vile and sinful things with each other's bodies." (Romans 1:24 TLB)
3. The particular sin of Sodom is one of sexual depravity.
 - a) In a few pages, I'm going to deviate a little on that topic, if for no other reason as it is such a "hot button" in our society right now.
 - b) Sodom could have been "equally" as guilty of being a 100% town of thieves or a 100% town of murders. My point is the specific sin of homosexuality is in view here, but it is the fact that the town "100%" turned away from God is the reason for the action.

4. It is also important to understand that God judges towns, cities and nations as well as people.
 - a) “Judgment” by God can be complete destruction, or a “lack of dominance”. It is important to understand that not all “biblical” judgment is about sending people to hell. There are other forms of “punishment/judgment” discussed in the bible.
 - b) One type of judgment is that of a complete destruction of a particular location:
 - i) Jesus said, “Woe to you, (town of) Korazin! Woe to you, (town of) Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 NIV)
 - ii) The towns of Korazin and Bethsaida no longer physically exist. Jesus held them accountable because of the miracles done there. God does give time for a city to repent of what is held accountable to that city, but there is a point of no return.
 - iii) One can also think about all of those ancient biblical tribes that longer exist today. Once God calls for an eternal judgment on nation, it is gone for good!
 - c) Another type of judgment is that of a nation never again being a “super-power”:
 - i) It (Egypt) will be the lowliest of kingdoms and will never again exalt itself above the other nations. I will make it so weak that it will never again rule over the nations. (Ezekiel 29:15 NIV)
 - ii) Egypt, which once ruled the known world for centuries, has always been a lowly kingdom. Since the time of Ezekiel’s prediction, Egypt has never ruled over anyone and I guarantee will never again!
 - d) The bible also predicts of some future judgments to come that haven’t happened yet.
 - i) Isaiah predicts that one day the city of Damascus (in modern Lebanon) will be utterly destroyed (Isaiah 17:1). Yet that city has been continually alive since Isaiah’s prediction. This will happen, and I suspect it is an “end time” prediction.
 - e) Finally, Jesus judges churches:
 - i) Jesus said to the church in Ephesus: Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. (Revelation 2:5 NIV)
 - a) “Lampstands” are word-pictures of individual churches (See Rev. 1:20).
 - b) The original church of Ephesus has long been destroyed and is now a pile of ruins for tourists to visit. They “lost their lampstand” as they refused to repent, as Jesus required of them.
 - f) Judgment also comes in the form of other punishments.
 - i) One of the sins committed by Lot in this chapter is he offers his two daughters to the Sodomites. No matter how you try to rationalize it, this is wrong.
 - ii) Later in the chapter we read of these two daughters having sex with their drunken father in order to produce children. Those children become nations that were thorns in the side of Israel for hundreds of years. The point is that God often judges sin in ways we don’t see initially but still have to pay the consequences.
 - iii) Which reminds me of an old joke about adultery: “God often punishes the adulterer by making him (or her) spend the rest of their life with their new partner.” ☺ The kind of person willing to have sexual relations with a married person is not a person who fears God. Often, living with that second person causes far more grief than the marriage they have damaged.
 - g) OK, I’ve punished you with enough introduction commentary. Let’s move on to the text before God decides to judge me on this! ☺

5. Chapter 19, Verse 1: The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.² "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square."
 - a) The first word is translated "the", which is accurate. The idea is that of the 3 "men" mentioned in the previous chapter, two of them moved on to Sodom. Here they are called angels, sent by God.
 - b) So why don't we read of "God himself" coming to Sodom as he came to Abraham? Why just the two messengers?
 - i) I believe there is a "word-picture" being shown for us here: God himself "cannot look" upon evil. Of course "God sees all" and is well aware of Sodom. I believe when a location gets to a point like Sodom, in a word-picture-sense, God "turns his back" and sends angels as final messengers prior to its destruction.
 - a) "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong." (Habakkuk 1:13a, NIV)
 - ii) Remember that Sodom did have some "evidence" of God. Remember that Sodom is one of the cities rescued by Abraham. When the King of Sodom offered material rewards to Abraham for this service, Abraham turned down that reward to show "he only served God". (Reference: Genesis 14:22-24). Abraham "witness" to the king should have been a warning to people of Sodom.
 - c) Back to Lot and the two angels: There is a "parallel" between the beginning of Chapter 18 when Abraham first saw the "three guys" show up and the beginning of Chapter 19 when Lot first saw these "two guys" show up.
 - i) In both cases, Abraham and Lot knew these were angels from God.
 - ii) In both cases, Abraham and Lot bowed down before them.
 - iii) They both offered food and refreshments. (Can angels digest food? ☺)
 - iv) We are going to read of lots of faults and mistakes by Lot in this chapter. Despite that, he still believes in the God of Abraham, and he has enough discernment to know that these two men are angels and sent by God. He doesn't turn them away, but bows low and calls them "sir" as a sign of respect.
 - d) We also see of the "fallen state" of Lot in this verse.
 - i) Sodom is a city called "evil" as far back as Chapter 13.
 - ii) Here we read of Lot "sitting in the gate". This means Lot is now in charge of who can and who cannot "do business" in Sodom. He is now "part of the city council".
 - iii) It is like the old saying of, "You can't play with fire and not get burned". Lot is now part of Sodom and is now strongly influenced by its culture.
6. Verse 3: But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.
 - a) Verse 2 states that the angels said they would spend the night in the open square.
 - b) Verse 3 says that Lot insisted so strongly, they spent the night in Lot's house.
 - i) Here is a question to ponder: Does this mean angels can change their minds? Do angels have the power to make free-will decisions?
 - a) You can argue, "They got further instructions from God to go with Lot", and/or, "This was a test to see if Lot would let them stay with him".
 - b) I don't have the answer to this question. It is just something to ponder.
 - c) Paul says in 1st Corinthians 6:3, that Christians will "judge angels". Why and how do angels require judging? Is it because of the decisions they have made?

- c) Back, to the text, this is the first reference to “yeast” (or leaven) in the bible.
 - i) Yeast, also known as leaven, is associated with sin. When Moses institutes the Passover meal centuries later, one of the key instructions is to not use yeast.
 - ii) It is a word-picture of sin as yeast “corrupts by puffing up”. Sin, like yeast, when left alone, grows bigger and bigger.
 - iii) How did Lot know all of this?
 - a) One can “simply” say, “Lot was in a hurry and made unleavened bread as you don’t have to wait for the dough to rise.”
 - b) For those of us who believe every word of the bible is there for a reason, I see this as a “foreshadow” of Lot knowing the right thing to do and a word-picture of the fact Lot is “still righteous” as he trusted in God.

7. Verse 4: Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom--both young and old--surrounded the house.⁵ 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."

- a) The key word about Sodom is the word “all” in Verse 4. It says, all the men of Sodom.
 - i) The town of Sodom had grown so much in their perversion that it is now all the men of the city who wanted to sexually attack these two angels.
- b) OK, it’s now time to tackle the issue of homosexuality.
 - i) Among the most common questions asked of Evangelical Christians is, “What is the big deal about homosexuality? They aren’t hurting anyone and there is nothing wrong with it. Jesus never condemned homosexuality.”
 - ii) Well, for starters, it is the first sin mentioned in the bible where a town gets destroyed for that sin. It is not the only reason a town is judged (destroyed) in the bible, but it is the first one mentioned.
 - a) You will read of bible critics saying the town was judged for violence or for lack of hospitality. If you learn your Hebrew, you will know the word that is translated “have sex with them” is a sexual reference in this context.
 - iii) God considers homosexuality a sin because it violates God’s desire for a one-man, one-woman marriage. Over and above the command to Adam and to Noah of “be fruitful and multiply”, think about some of the 10 commandments: “Honor your father and mother”, or “You shall not commit adultery”. Homosexuality activity is a violation of these commands.
 - a) The ideal is God designed men and women to live together.
 - b) As any married person will tell you, men and women are different and any marriage is a challenge as men and women process information differently. This is why we need God as a center of our marriage as it makes that marriage easier to manage.
 - c) I am sure many homosexual couples have an easier time getting along. Men can get along with men easier than men can get along with women. The problem is that is not what God intended for society to exist.
 - iv) An argument made by those living in the homosexual lifestyle is that it is “instinctive”. They will argue, “I was born this way and I can’t help it.”
 - a) If that were true, that would be cruel of God. If God designed you that way, and then forbade homosexuality, that would be unfair of God.
 - b) I do believe God creates all of us with certain weaknesses and all of us with certain strengths. All of us have weaknesses in certain temptations. (The trick to remember in life is giving God our “strong suits” as well as our “weak suits”. Peter’s “strong suit” was his boldness. He didn’t turn that over to God and denied Jesus three times when he should have been bold.)

- c) Romans Chapter 1 also teaches on this topic:
 - (1) “Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.” (Romans 1:24 NIV)
 - (2) “Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.” (Romans 1:26 NIV)
 - (3) I believe once you’ve “crossed that line” to homosexual behavior, there is a physical change within you. God is saying in a sense, “Ok, that is the way you want to live, I will physically change you”.
 - (4) On the other hand I have seen people come from a homosexual backgrounds, become born-again Christians and change. In many cases, they still have to “fight that urge” because it is still an inherent weakness that they have to deal with. There is a national ministry called “Exodus” ministering to those who deal with this issue.
- v) Next, I want to tackle the false idea that, “All sins are the same in God’s eye”.
 - a) On one hand, entrance into heaven does require perfection. God does not tolerate any sin whatsoever. This leads back to my Habakkuk 1:13a quote of “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.” To get into heaven requires God’s perfect-sacrifice on our behalf.
 - b) With that said, it is important to understand that some sins are worse than others in God’s eyes.
 - (1) Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” (John 19:11 NIV)
 - (2) If Jesus said someone is guilty of a “greater sin”, then Jesus is stating that some sins are worse than others.
- vi) So how bad is the sin of homosexuality?
 - a) “You shall not lie (sexually) with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. (Leviticus 18:22 NKJV)
 - b) Some people will say, “Christians are under grace. Not everything in “the law” applies to the New Testament Christian.” That’s true as some of the Old Testament “food laws” do not apply to Christians. There are many laws that do apply. Murder and stealing were part of the “law” and they are still outlawed to this day.
 - c) The verse listed in Leviticus right before this homosexuality condemnation (Leviticus 18:21) is about taking your baby and burning it as an offer to the god “Molech”. It was a ritual of that day, saying, “I trust in the god Molech more than my baby”. This too, is an “abomination”.
 - d) The verse listed in Leviticus right after this homosexuality condemnation (Leviticus 18:23) is about “sleeping with animals”. I doubt God condones this today. This too, is an “abomination”.
 - e) My point is if the abominations of child sacrifice and bestiality still apply today, the abomination of homosexuality also applies today.
- vii) Let’s talk about the argument that “Jesus never condemned homosexuality”.
 - a) Well, Jesus never condemned rape either. That doesn’t make it right.
 - b) Jesus did declare that Moses was a prophet of God (e.g.: Mark 12:26), and Moses is the one who wrote of the “abominations” in Leviticus.
 - c) Further, Jesus spoke to Paul in Acts (Acts 9:5, et.al.) and Jesus declared Paul as being sent by Him (Acts 9:15). Paul is the one who condemned homosexuality in Romans 1 among other places in his writings.

- viii) What Christians “cringe” at the most is the public condoning of homosexuality.
 - a) What caused the judgment on Sodom is not the fact that homosexuality existed, but the fact that it got to a point where it was openly condoned and accepted in society.
 - b) Homosexuality in American culture is to be treated as a sin. Many states had “sodomy” as a crime on the “books” for decades. These laws were not designed to invade the bedrooms of people’s homes, but to prevent the public condoning of homosexuality as a practice.
 - c) America was designed to live under Judeo-Christian values not, every law of the Old Testament. Part of those values is to honor the one-man, one-woman marriage commitment as the standard for society. I am convinced that God will judge America in one of the ways described in the introduction to this chapter if America continues to condone the public acceptance of homosexuality.
 - (1) “If God does not judge the United States of America, God owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology...And God doesn’t apologize” Billy Graham.
- ix) Finally, we need to discuss the Christian attitude toward those who are living in the homosexual lifestyle.
 - a) Nobody likes a “holier-than-thou” attitude, and that would include someone living in a homosexual lifestyle.
 - b) We are called as Christians to be witnesses to the world. We disagree with that aspect of their lifestyle, but it means we should treat them decently in every other aspect of life.
 - c) There has to be a balance between “toleration” versus “condemnation”. As God’s “witnesses” to the world, we need to have a loving, giving attitude and at the same time have the boldness to stand up for God. The key is not to “fix” their homosexuality, but to be witnesses to them for Jesus. It is not the job of Christians to “clean people up”, but God’s job. Our job is just to be a witness to them and preach the Gospel, period.
 - d) Christians are never called to beat up sinners. There are no bible references to that concept. In that sense, the sin of homosexuality is no different from any other sin. Remember the cliché, “But for the grace of God go I”.
- x) OK, I’ve been rambling for over two pages on this topic. This is a hot topic in our society right now, and it was best to tackle it head on for that reason. Meanwhile, let’s get back to Genesis.

8. Verse 6: Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him ⁷ and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. ⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof."

- a) OK, I’ve been off topic for a few pages. Time to recap the story:
 - i) Here is this angry mob outside the door. The text says that all the men of the city were there, “young and old.” The two angels are in Lot’s house. Lot then goes outside to try to calm the crowd. He tries to offer them his two daughters instead of the angels as a substitute.
- b) No matter how you try to rationalize why Lot offered his daughters, it doesn’t cut it.
 - i) Some commentators take the view that the concept of “hospitality” is so important, you would rather offer your own children than a guest.
 - ii) Some commentators take the view that Lot was hoping his son-in-laws to be (the chapter implies both daughters were engaged to be married) would come to the rescue, and thus Lot made this offer.

- iii) Some commentators take the view that because Lot knew they were homosexuals, that they would never accept the daughters.
 - iv) My view, is that this is just plain sinful by Lot, period.
 - c) The lesson to learn from Lot offering his daughter is that when you are “surrounded by sin”, it can lead to irrational and bad decisions.
 - d) Later in the chapter, after Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed and Lot is living alone with his 2 daughters, we are going to read of the daughters scheming to get pregnant via their father and getting Lot drunk first. I am convinced that story later in the chapter is meant to be tied to this story. The fact that Lot offered his daughters to the wicked, is later “punished” by God by allowing his two daughters to perform that act on their father. The act by their daughter is another example of wrongful, sinful behavior.
- 9. Verse 9: "Get out of our way," they replied. And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge! We'll treat you worse than them." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.
 - a) The key phrase to me is “We'll treat you worse than them” by the mob.
 - i) Notice that this phrase implies that they knew they were doing wrong. By stating the fact they yelled out “treat you worse than them”, they knew that raping these men was somehow wrong. It didn't stop them from trying.
 - ii) Sin can get to a point where you know it is wrong, but you “can't help yourself” and it controls you. Alcoholic's Anonymous says the test to see if you are an alcoholic is, “Does your habit control you, or do you control the habit?” Sex itself is not a sin. The perversion thereof, and an obsession thereon, becomes the sin. Anything that takes your focus off of God can become a “little god” and therefore idolatry, and a sin.
 - b) Notice that despite the threat to take Lot, they “kept pressing” on the door.
 - i) “Group behavior” is rarely, if ever a good thing. It often takes one or a few bad leaders to cause a whole group to go astray. In another typology, “Sodom” is a word-picture for any group that lacks a fear-of-God leader within that group. It is easier to be lead down the wrong path than the right path.
- 10. Verse 10: But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door.

¹¹ Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.

 - a) The last we read of the townsfolk of Sodom is that they were struck with blindness.
 - i) There is a “pun” that runs through the chapter about physical darkness and spiritual darkness. Back in Verse 1 it mentioned that the angels arrived “at dark” (or sunset) and here we read of the men of Sodom being struck with blindness.
 - ii) Jesus describes eternal hell as “darkness” (ref: Matthew 8:12, 22:13 and 25:30).
 - iii) The word picture being painted is about sin leading to a path of “eternal darkness”. If God is described as “light” in the beginning of Genesis, the willful avoidance of that light can be described as “seeking darkness”. Punishing someone by sending them to eternal darkness is appropriate because, essentially, “that is what they want”. Here in Genesis 19, we have “a warning step” of blinding people so hopefully, they can “see” the error of their ways. Sometimes, people have to be “made blind” in order to see their faults.
 - b) Here's a good theological question: Isn't blindness “enough” punishment? Let's assume for the moment the blindness is permanent. Why didn't God stop there and say, “If any other town acts like Sodom, I will strike the townsfolk blind.” Why the necessity for complete destruction?
 - i) The answer is sin is incurable. To “handicap” a person does not cure the sin problem. Sin must be judged and must be destroyed.

- ii) Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed and permanently judged as examples to us of a future judgment.
 - a) In Noah's day, the world was judged as it had become 100% corrupt, other than Noah's family. God said he would never again judge the world with a flood. Our problem of course, is we didn't read the fine print of the contract. ☺ God still judges locations, but now works on a smaller level.
 - b) Does this mean that every time a city is destroyed it is God judging that city? That question can't be answered without God's knowledge. We do know that all things done by God have a purpose.
- 11. Verse 12: The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here--sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, ¹³ because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it."
 - a) The next question is "Why did the angels ask this question of Lot?" Why did the angels want to know if Lot had any "family" in this city and for Lot to get them out of there?
 - i) For starters, remember that Abraham prayed to God in Chapter 18 to spare the righteous. Abraham and God "haggled" down to 10 people and stopped there. In a sense, these verses here in Chapter 19 are God answering that prayer.
 - a) It makes you stop and think about praying for others. I wonder how many lives have been spared judgment through the centuries simply because a "righteous person" prayed for those living in a sinful location?
 - b) These two verses are good encouragement for us to pray for others.
 - ii) The second reason the angels asked this question is for us to show how little influence Lot had living in Sodom.
 - a) You got the impression that at one time, Abraham and Lot were "equally" blessed with possessions back in Chapter 13. That was when Abraham and Lot had to part ways because the place they were living in was not big enough for all of their possessions.
 - b) Let me paraphrase what the angels said with a built-in sermon. "Lot, you at one time, were "sticking close" to Abraham. You followed his ways. Now here you are living in Sodom. What happened to all of your servants? What happened to all of your possessions? We have to get the righteous out of Sodom before it gets destroyed. Who is left? Lot, look what living in Sodom has done to you! All that we have left to save besides you is your wife, your two daughters, and possibly your sons-in-law to be".
- 12. Verse 14: So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.
 - a) This verse also shows how little an influence Sodom was over his future sons-in-law.
 - i) Reading "between the lines", we learned Lot's two daughters were virgins back in Verse 8. Here we read of his sons-in-law. This is how we infer that the two girls were engaged, but not yet married.
 - b) Let me try to paraphrase and expand upon these sons-in-laws reactions with another sermon: "Look pops, we've heard your weird ideas about God and all. ☺ Now you tell us that these angels came and told us that God is going to destroy this place. Yeah right. Look Lot, you seem like a nice guy and all, but let's face it, you live here in Sodom. This isn't exactly the home of the religious. It's hard for us to take anyone serious about God who lives in Sodom. Therefore, we're not going with you."

- i) The lesson to be learned is that of being a witness. This leads to Jesus teaching that we are to be “In this world, but not of this world” (See John 8:23, 18:36). If you are a “part” of this world, nobody will take you seriously when speaking about God.
 - ii) This is not about being perfect. Nonbelievers understand the concept that nobody is perfect. What they do watch is to see if you live your life differently. If you are no different than any other resident of Sodom, why should they believe you?
- 13. Verse 15: With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished."
 - a) We have another “darkness” pun in Verse 15. The “coming of dawn” is a word-picture of “light coming”. It can be seen as a reference to God coming to judge Sodom.
 - i) “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” (John 1:5 NIV)
- 14. Verse 16: When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them. ¹⁷ As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!"
 - a) Notice Lot hesitated in Verse 16. He probably thought about his life in Sodom, his business, his home, his friends in town, etc.
 - i) Again, this is back to Jesus teaching us to not be part of this world. There may come a time when God is going to ask you to give up all you own in order to find out if you trust Him more than all of your possessions.
 - a) Jesus said, “In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:33 NIV)
 - ii) Personally, if I saw an angel, and I was convinced the angel was sent from God, and this angel told me to start running before my town was destroyed, I would grab the wife and kids and start moving. I guess if I stopped and thought about losing all my “stuff” I would hesitate too.
 - iii) Notice God did not say to Lot, “Sorry bud, you hesitated, you lose”. ☺ Remember that Lot was saved because he trusted in the God of Abraham. Remember that Lot was spared judgment because Abraham prayed for him. Personally, I don’t think God would start “the fire and brimstone show” until Lot was out of town. This isn’t about Lot hesitating. This is about God keeping his promises. God promised Abraham he would not destroy the righteous with the unrighteous in Chapter 18. This is about God’s reputation being on the line.
 - a) We should pray the same way “Lord, I ask you to have mercy on me, (or my town or my country), not because I’m a good person, but do it because your reputation is on the line.” We don’t approach God based on our goodness, but on His goodness.
 - b) I have more to say about these verses, but let’s move on and we’ll tie the verses together.
- 15. Verse 18: But Lot said to them, "No, my lords, please! ¹⁹ Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die. ²⁰ Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it--it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared."
 - a) God told Lot (via these angels) in Verse 17 to flee to the mountains and not stop anywhere in this plain where Sodom and Gomorrah are located.
 - b) Remember “where God leads, God provides”. If God tells you to go to the mountain, then you can trust that God will provide for you on that mountain.
 - c) Here we see another example of Lot “doubting” God’s provisions. Lot pleads with the angels to let him live in some little town called “Zoar” (Verse 22) as opposed to living in a cave in the mountains.

- i) Again, let me try to paraphrase Lot's thoughts: "Lord, I'm a businessman. I need to live in a city and set up shop somewhere. I know I was a sheepherder at one time like Uncle Abraham, but I'm a city guy now. I had a good business going in Sodom. Yeah I know these guys were pretty bad, but I made enough money off of them to support the family and pay the mortgage. Can you please not send me to the mountains? There's a little town up the road. How about sending me there?"
 - ii) What God desires of us more than anything is obedience. When God tells us to jump, the correct response is "How high?" as opposed to "Do I have to?"
- 16. Verse 21: He said to him, "Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. ²² But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it." (That is why the town was called Zoar.)
 - a) "Zoar" was one of the five "losing" kingdoms in the Chapter 14 battle of the 4 kings and the 5 kings. The word means "little" or "small" as it is a small town.
 - b) Notice that God puts up with Lot's request. The interesting thing is that by Verse 30, we read of Lot and his two daughters moving up to the mountains as God had requested, without any explanation given as to why Lot made that second move, other than the fact that Lot was afraid to dwell in Zoar (Verse 30).
 - i) Maybe when the brimstone started, Lot thought, "Gee, maybe I better take God more seriously. Where was that mountain again?" ☺
 - ii) Maybe the townsfolk's in Zoar didn't like Lot. God may have made it miserable for him there and he had to move on.
 - iii) My point is that God works on our level. He compromised with Lot not because he wanted Lot to live in Zoar, but because out of God's love for those who seek him, God will "come down to our level" and allow us what we want.
 - c) Maturity as a Christian is about full (not partial) obedience to God. When God calls you to do something, difficult as it may be, it is because God wants the best for you.
- 17. Verse 23: By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah--from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵ Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities--and also the vegetation in the land.
 - a) There are lots of commentaries out there on "how" this happened. Some argue it was a volcanic eruption, and others just say it was a supernatural action of God.
 - i) Personally, I don't worry about the "how" question. If God can create the heavens and earth, He could find a way to wipe out Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - b) So let's get back to a "why" question. Why this method of destroying it? God could have just "zapped" the city of out existence if He wanted to?
 - i) I think the answer is the same as for "why" God used a flood to destroy the world. There is plenty of geological evidence of a worldwide flood. That evidence supports the authenticity of the bible and the fact that God exists.
 - c) Sodom and Gomorrah is probably under/near the Dead Sea, on the southeast border of Israel. It is also called the "Salt sea" as it has a very high salt content (much like Salt Lake in Utah). It is a "dead sea" as no fish can live in that sea due to the high salt content. I am personally convinced this is the ex-location of Sodom and Gomorrah. God left that location "dead" as a permanent witness to the world of this destruction.
 - i) Let's look back at Genesis 13:10: "Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)"
 - a) Sodom and Gomorrah were once beautiful places. The corruption was due to the "sin problem". It was judged by God and is a "mercy killing".

18. Verse 26: But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.
- a) OK, we have now gone through all of these verses of how God is sparing Lot despite the fact that Lot messed up. We've read how Lot is spared because of Abraham's prayer.
 - i) Further, we read of Lot "hesitating" in Verse 16.
 - ii) So here is Lot's wife, "hesitating" again in Verse 26 and she gets "zapped". ☺
 - a) OK, John, what's the deal?
 - b) Luckily for me, Jesus gives us the answer: "On that day (future judgment) no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife!" (Luke 17:31-32 NIV)
 - c) For all I know, Lot's wife may be in heaven. She may have trusted in the God of Abraham and was "spared" eternal salvation. I don't know for sure. I do know that there was a literal Mr. & Mrs. Lot and she was turned into a pillar of salt. Jesus is teaching that Lot's wife died as an example to us that when judgment comes and God calls us to separate ourselves from non-Godly people, there should be no hesitation.
 - b) Let's clear up some technical things and move on.
 - i) Most commentators believe that Lot's wife "turning into" a pillar of salt was most likely about her being buried in salt from the fire/brimstone rain that poured down. You can read the Hebrew text in that context.
 - ii) Further, the idea of Lot's wife "looking back" can be translated that she delayed or longed for what she was about to lose. The Hebrew words used are different from the ones that describe Lot as "hesitating" back in Verse 16.
19. Verse 27: Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the LORD.²⁸ He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.²⁹ So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.
- a) All of Chapter 19 focuses on Lot except these few verses about Abraham.
 - b) These verses are to remind us of the connection between Abraham's prayer for Lot's salvation in Verse 18 and the fact that Lot was "saved" here in Verse 19.
 - c) From Abraham's visual perspective, he did not know if Lot was spared, he only knew that God went through with His promise to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - i) Abraham knew Lot was spared because God told him so. That is how we are to have faith in God. We are saved because "God told us so" through his word. We as believers can visually see some of God's truth, just as Abraham saw Sodom and Gomorrah being destroyed, but he couldn't visually see it all. That is where the concept of "living by faith" and "trusting in God's word" comes into play.
 - d) I should also comment on the text says, "He (God) remembered Abraham" in Verse 29.
 - i) It is not God saying "Oh yeah, I forget, I promised Abraham I'd spare Lot". ☺
 - ii) When the bible says God "remembered" it is from our perspective and not God's. It is a reminder to us that God keeps the promises to us.
20. Verse 30: Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and settled in the mountains, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar. He and his two daughters lived in a cave.³¹ One day the older daughter said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man around here to lie with us, as is the custom all over the earth."³² Let's get our father to drink wine and then lie with him and preserve our family line through our father."
- a) Now we have the story of the Lot's two daughters scheming to get dad drunk so they could get pregnant by him and have children.

- b) Some commentators think that these daughters thought, “The destruction is world-wide, and therefore, all men are dead. We have to be like Noah’s family and repopulate the world.”
 - i) I think a better speculation is, “We came from a town that is cursed by God. No man is going to want a wife that comes from a cursed town. Therefore, we’re going to have to have dad impregnate us in order to have children”.
 - c) These verses also make you wonder how and why Lot still had wine in his possession!
 - d) There is no getting around the “sin-factor” of these verses. The bible lays out the gruesome sins of mankind. A commentator once quipped, “It is better to teach your children of the depravity of mankind via the bible then to let them learn it on the streets”. (Paraphrase of a commentary by Donald Barnhouse on this passage in Genesis).
 - e) You can see how the “living in Sodom” had had a long term affect on Lot’s daughters as well as Lot himself. Living in “the world” can make up rationalize evil thoughts like seducing your own father.
21. Verse 33: That night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter went in and lay with him. He was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up. ³⁴ The next day the older daughter said to the younger, "Last night I lay with my father. Let's get him to drink wine again tonight, and you go in and lie with him so we can preserve our family line through our father." ³⁵ So they got their father to drink wine that night also, and the younger daughter went and lay with him. Again he was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up.
- a) There is not much to add to the depravity of this sin that is not directly written in the text.
 - b) You can’t read this and not think about Lot offering his two daughters to the angry mob instead of the two angels back in Verse 8. In a sense, this is “just punishment” on Lot by God for the sin of offering his daughters.
22. Verse 36: So both of Lot’s daughters became pregnant by their father. ³⁷ The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. ³⁸ The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today.
- a) For many hundreds of years after this event, the Moabites and the Ammonites became “thorns in the side” of the Israelites.
 - b) The great question is now, “Why did God allow this event to happen? Let’s face it, it wasn’t “Israel’s” fault (sons of Abraham) that Lot’s daughters did this act and gave birth to two of Israel’s enemies-for-centuries.
 - i) I think the lesson to learn is, “You can take the people out of Sodom, but you can’t take Sodom out of the people”. The influence of “sin” in one’s life, even those that believe in God is always there, and there is long term consequences of past sinful actions. Yes the Israelite nation wasn’t “guilty” of this sin, but they still had to live with the consequences of a sinful world, just as we do today.
 - c) There are some interesting “side effects” of the Ammonites and the Moabites.
 - i) When Moses lead the Israelites to the promised land, they were told to avoid the territories of the Ammonites and the Moabites, because they were “cousins”. In fact, God told Moses not to “harass” the Moabites as God had given some land to the descendants of Lot as a possession (See Deuteronomy 2:9)
 - a) When we get to the book of Ruth, we discover that she was a Moabitess. Ruth married a Jew (Boaz) who became part of the Messianic line. The point is that God wasn’t “through” with the Moabites and had a “purpose” in allowing Lot’s daughters to perform that action.
 - d) There is an interesting judgment on the tribes of the Moabites and Ammonites many hundreds of years later during the time of Zephaniah. He proclaimed that they would be destroyed “Like Sodom and Gomorrah” (See Zephaniah 2:9). There is a “pun” in that these two nations were” born” from the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah and these nations met the same fate. They no longer exist today.

23. Let's wrap it up. If you haven't figured out by now, the key word in this chapter is "judgment".
- a) The towns of Sodom and Gomorrah are judged and are left as examples for us.
 - b) Lot's wife is "judged" and used by Jesus himself as an example for us.
 - c) Lot himself is saved, but had to live a cave dwellers life as judgment for : "wasting" his life living in judgment.
 - d) The Israelites had to suffer for centuries of dealing with the Moabites and Ammonites due to the sins of others, just as we have to suffer the consequences of the sins of others. Those two nations were eventually judged for their actions, and no longer exist.
 - e) What I wanted to show in this chapter is that not all judgments by God are an immediate one-way ticket to hell. There are other forms of judgment. God judges locations and nations as well as individual people.
 - f) What God wants from us is to learn from these judgment lessons.
 - i) First and foremost, just because God "puts up" with sin doesn't mean it is not going to be judged one day. God is a God-of-judgment. It happens on God's timing and not our own.
 - ii) It should guide our prayer life. As Abraham prayed and got Lot spared, so we should pray for others. God likes to work through us to save others.
 - iii) It should cause us to pray for our families (i.e., our "nations") and the location where we live. The bible teaches that God appoints our leaders (See Romans 13:1) and therefore God wants on us to pray for those in leadership.
 - iv) Who knows how many souls we can save, lives we can spare, and locations we can preserve simply by bringing those requests to God?
24. Let's pray: Father, we thank you for these sobering lessons on judgment. This is sometimes difficult and overwhelming to consider, especially when it affects those we love and hold dear. Help us to pray for the lost, and help those who seek you, but are compromising with the world. Further, help us to examine our own lives, in areas were we too , are still "part of this world". We thank you for sparing us from the judgment to come and we live to glorify you in gratitude for the price you have already paid. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.