

## The Plan from the Beginning

### Daily Bible Reading Plan

#### Class Notes for Week 5: Genesis Chapters 18:16-33; 19:1-38

For this week's class, there are at least 3 spiritual lessons we can learn from our reading:

1. We should care for and pray for all the lost and sinful people in this world, even if their deeds are detestable to us.
2. We should heed the warnings of God to get away from sinful things and danger. Without hesitation, regret or remorse, we need to leave evil behind.
3. Do not allow yourself to be placed in a position where sin can creep into and damage your life. We can be blinded as to what damage the Devil can do. If we become complacent or distracted, the damage can be done before we can react.

#### **I. Genesis 18:16-33: Abraham pleads for the people of Sodom**

- After their discussion about Isaac being born to Sarah, the three men (two angels and the Lord, as we find out in this week's narrative) leave the tent of Abraham and walk out towards Sodom.
- In verses 17-19, the Lord reasons that He should not hide from Abraham what He is about to do to Sodom. Why does He feel the need to do so? Knowing that many nations will come from Abraham, we see that the Lord wants Abraham to be able to instruct these descendants about righteousness and the doom of the wicked.
- Verse 20 makes one curious: who is crying out from Sodom if there are no righteous people there? Is sin and debauchery itself an outcry to the Lord? The words "very grave" at the end of v. 20 mean abundantly heavy, weighty or burdensome. It is interesting to note that Abraham's descendants did not learn the lesson well, as we see from Ezekiel 16:48, 49, Judah's sinfulness had exceeded that of Sodom before they were taken captive by the Babylonians.
- God decides to investigate the outcry and verify the sin of Sodom by dispatching His two angelic companions. We certainly know that the true behavior in Sodom could not have been hidden from the sight of God, so why send the angels to investigate? Does He still have hope? Is His mind still uncertain about what He is going to do? Maybe they are sent simply to retrieve Lot.
- Abraham pleads and bargains for the life of those in Sodom with God in verses 23-32. Abraham begins this with careful honor and respect, praising God as righteous, just, and the supreme Judge of the world. Abraham, by his plea to spare the citizens of this sinful city, shows great spiritual maturity. He could have simply pled for Lot. We would normally argue that God spare the innocent, not kill them for the sake of the guilty, assuming that in most cases it is a few bad apples that are spoiling the barrel. Abraham instead pleads for the guilty on account of the innocent. His desire is that the majority be spared on account of an extremely small minority (50, 45, 40, 30, 20, and 10). God promises at each step to withhold punishment if a small number of righteous people are found. It would be wonderful to hear the tones of conversation in the discussion, to see why Abraham continues to lower the number. God never does confirm that the number specified exists, but Abraham knows to keep lowering the number. Without any guarantee what is going to happen, Abraham stops at ten and goes home.
- Pleading with God, or inquiring about his motives is not sinful when presented unselfishly. Moses pleads for the sinful people of Israel to be spared in Exodus 32:7-14 when God plans to destroy them all and start a new nation from Moses after the golden calf incident. In verse 32, he even requests that he himself be blotted out of the Lord's book if the Lord will not forgive the people. A psalmist also beseeches the Lord for help, wondering if He has noticed (Psalm 44:23, 24). In reality, our questions about God, His plans, His motive and actions are a primary reason for Bible study.

#### **II. Genesis 19:1-29: Lot is spared from the destruction**

- Two of Abraham's visitors (first referred to here as angels) travel down to Sodom and meet Lot at the gate. Lot, perhaps recognizing who they were, entreats them not to sleep at the gate of the city, but to stay in his home. We can hope that some righteousness remains in Lot by evidence of the hospitality he shows strangers.
- Verse 4 indicates the state of depravity the people of Sodom had sunken to. It is not isolated sin, but widespread (all men, young and old, from all parts of the city come).
- Lot, disappointing us, puts forth the despicable offer of his two virgin daughters to satisfy the men. While his intent of protecting the strangers is noble, his solution is foolish and sinful.

- The angels snatch Lot back inside and blind the wretched crowd. The angels could have killed them for the threat, but leave justice up to God.
- They tell Lot to gather his people up and make ready to leave. Lot tries to convince his sons-in-law to leave (number of married daughters unknown, obviously more than one), but they think he is joking. They have apparently seen enough righteousness in Lot to take him seriously. Do we conduct ourselves in a way that people will take us seriously when we talk about grave spiritual things?
- At dawn, the angels tell him to leave right away. Lot (for an unspecified reason) delays. Perhaps he is hoping his married daughters and/or sons will show or maybe he still has doubts about what God is going to do.
- Lot is told to flee into the mountains, but Lot wants to go to the nearby city of Zoar. The Lord agrees to spare Zoar. Wonder why Lot does not want to go into the hills now, especially when we find him there later? Maybe Lot had become a city boy and unable to “rough it” like Abraham!
- Zoar must have been close indeed, as they arrive there quickly. The destruction begins when “the sun had risen over the earth”. All of the plain, including Sodom and Gomorrah, are utterly destroyed with fire and brimstone rained down from heaven. This method of destruction does seem more merciful and quick than drowning in ever-increasing flood waters.
- Lot’s wife looks back and becomes a pillar of salt. She is much maligned in commentary and reference. One should pause and consider her reasons for turning back. Did she hope to see her sons or daughters escaping the destruction? Simple curiosity? Remorse or regret-cannot just leave it behind?
- Abraham sees the destruction the next morning. We are not told if he does or does not know that Lot escaped. We are told the reason Lot is spared. Because of God’s grace to Abraham (v. 29)

### III. **Genesis 19:30-38: Lot and his daughters sin**

- Despite his earlier plea, Lot ends up in the hill country after all, living in caves. Maybe they are fearful that Zoar will one day suffer the same fate as Sodom, or they are unwelcome there because of where they are from.
- His daughters, for whatever reason, are distraught that there are no men left in the world to bear children by. Did the destruction seem so great that they thought the world was wiped out? Was not Zoar spared? Were they, in fact, true daughters of Sodom and depraved?
- They contrive to get their father drunk and sleep with him over two nights. The Scripture tells us that Lot did not know when they came in or when they left. Some have speculated as to how he could be drunk enough to not even know his own daughters were coercing him into sex, but still be able to function sexually.
- Two children are born from this incestuous relationship: Moab, the father of the Moabites, and Ben-Ammi, the forerunner of the Ammonites. These two tribes would be occupy the borders of Israel (Deuteronomy 2:9, 19) and be enemies to them (Deuteronomy 23:3-6). However, we see that the line of David and Christ comes through a well-known Moabitess: Ruth. In contrast, bad things come to Israel from a daughter of the Ammonites, Naamah. She is listed as the mother of Rehoboam, the less than scrupulous son of Solomon, born of a forbidden relationship with a foreign wife.