

Genesis 19:1-11

The Judgment of God Against Sodom

To mention the words “Sodom” and “Gomorrah” is to speak of unbridled sin

- These cities are spoken of almost as a proverb or byword

Even among those who are not exposed to Biblical teaching, the cities present a case of debauchery and degradation

- To those of us who are exposed to the Scriptures, we know all too well the tragic reality of sin and God’s judgment that fell

This morning, we arrive in Genesis 19

- This will not be a chapter that chronicles great faith
- This will not be a chapter that promotes godly character

Instead, this chapter will describe the putrid and vile conduct of the inhabitants of Sodom

- It is interesting that Sodom is the main city in view
- Gomorrah is not examined as carefully, although God’s judgment fell upon it as well

We recall from Genesis 18 that Abraham provided hospitality to three “men” (18:2)

- Of course, this was Moses’ way of describing how they appeared to Abraham from a physical standpoint

Actually, two of these men were angels

- The third Person was none other than Jesus Christ, making a pre-incarnate appearance to mankind

God appeared to Abraham in Genesis 17 to renew his promise of a son

- Chapter 18 records another appearance of God to Abraham
- But this time, Sarah was listening in the background
- God promised that one year from that point, Sarah would have a son, Isaac

After making sure that Abraham and Sarah understood this Divine promise of a future offspring, the LORD told Abraham what He was about to do

- “The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. ²¹ I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know” (Gen 18:20-21)

God was informing Abraham that He was about to bring judgment upon these cities for their sin

- No doubt Abraham knew the condition of the cities
- He had lived in the vicinity of Sodom and Gomorrah and was well acquainted with their sinfulness

But Abraham was concerned for his nephew, Lot

- He knew that Lot was living in the city of Sodom
- He also knew that if God was planning on destroying Sodom, Lot would be swept away as well

So what we saw in the latter part of Genesis 18 is Abraham ask God about His decision to judge these cities

- Abraham asks, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” (18:23)

Starting with fifty and ending with ten, Abraham inquires of the LORD if He will still bring judgment if that number of righteous souls are found there

- God's response was that He would not destroy the city if He found even ten righteous people living in the city

The chapter ends with Abraham ceasing to ask God any more questions

- As he stopped asking, "**the LORD departed**" (18:33)

Chapter 19 flows naturally out of chapter 18

- The events that transpire in this chapter take place in the same day, later that evening to be exact

Chapter 19 outlines itself in four (4) general divisions:

- I. The depravity of the city (19:1-11)
- II. The deliverance of the righteous (19:12-22)
- III. The destruction of the sinners (19:23-29)
- IV. The degradation of the family (19:30-38)

We will look at this chapter in three sermons

- Today we will look at the depravity of the city (19:1-11)
- Next week, we will look at the deliverance of the righteous (19:12-12)
- In two weeks, we will look at the destruction of the sinners (19:23-29) and the degradation of the family (19:30-38)

Let's read Genesis 19:1-11

We will see four (4) demonstrations of the actions and attitudes toward the angels in these eleven verses

- The demonstration of politeness to the angels (19:1-3)
- The demonstration of perversion toward the angels (19:4-5)
- The demonstration of protection of the angels (19:6-8)
- The demonstration of preservation by the angels (19:9-11)

I. The demonstration of politeness to the angels (1-3)

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.

The chapter opens up with a reference to "**the two angels**"

- These aren't just any two angels
- These are the same two angels that accompanied the LORD in His visit to Abraham in chapter 18

Earlier that same day, they had been in Mamre where Abraham lived (18:1)

- Now they appear to Lot in Sodom (19:1)

This was a fairly substantial distance between these two cities

- It was between 18-40 miles¹

¹ Victor P. Hamilton, *NICOT, Genesis 18-50*, 31.

To walk this distance as a human in the same day would be impossible

- But for an angel, it would be rather easy to be transported from one location to the next

Even though they had the appearance of men, they were authentic angels

- We read something similar to this in Hebrews 13:2, “**Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it**”

From what we know early on in the chapter, Lot didn’t immediately recognize that these “**men**” were angels

- But we also understand that Abraham didn’t immediately recognize the supernatural identify of his visitors, either

We notice that the two angels “**came to Sodom in the evening**”

- They came just prior to nightfall
- It would soon be time for everyone to go to sleep

As they enter the city, Lot is “**sitting in the gate of Sodom**”

- The gate of a city was where official political business took place
- It was the place where the leaders of the city made important decisions²

So we can surmise that Lot was perhaps some type of official or leader of the city

When Lot saw *them*, he rose to meet them and bowed down *with his face to the ground*.

As Lot was acting in this official capacity as a leader, he noticed these two men

- As we mentioned previously, Lot didn’t realize that these men were angels at this point
- The greeting and hospitality that he shows them was customary of his day³

Keeping in line with traditional customs of the day, Lot “**rose to meet them and bowed down *with his face to the ground***”

- This was a sign of honor as guests were welcomed

The word for “**bowed down**” is the same Hebrew word used of Abraham greeting these same men (18:2)

- So we see that Abraham and Lot respond in similar ways to these angels

² And he said, ‘Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant’s house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.’

Not only did Abraham and Lot both display a common greeting to these men

- They both extended a similar invitation to have these men enjoy a meal with them

You might remember that Abraham prepared an entire feast for his guests

- During the hot part of the day, he was taking a break anyway
- He had Sarah prepare a royal feast for these men

² John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison*, 200.

³ W.H. Griffith-Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary*, 171.

Lot, on the other hand, faced a different situation

- It was evening, according to verse 1
- He didn't have the time to prepare such a feast

Lot also knew that since it was so late, these men didn't need to be traveling anymore that night

- He invites them to stay in his own home

After they have had a good night's rest, they could proceed on their journey

- Little did Lot know that Sodom was their final destination
- They had been sent by the LORD to investigate the spiritual state of the city

You might remember what the LORD told Abraham in Genesis 18:20-21 said, **“The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. ²¹ I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know”**

These angels were God's messengers and representatives

- But Lot didn't know that...yet

They said however, ‘No, but we shall spend the night in the square.’

Although Lot made a fairly generous offer, the men decline his offer

- They state that they will spend the night **“in the square”**

This would have been the open area of the city

- It was unprotected and Lot knew this

³ Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

Knowing the sin of Sodom, Lot **“urged”** these men **“strongly”** to reconsider his offer

- The angels accept his proposal and enter into his home

Once inside Lot's house, he **“prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate”**

- Obviously, this couldn't have matched the feast that Abraham prepared
- But it is designed to show comparisons between the two men

It seems that Lot is the only one in the home who is preparing the meal

- All of the verbs speak of Lot's actions
- No mention is made of his wife or two daughters helping at all

For Lot to prepare **“unleavened bread”** was to speak of a quick meal

- This type of biscuit didn't take long to make
- It was a meal designed to be made in a hurry⁴

In these first three verses, we see the hospitality that was shown to these men

- Little did Lot know the true identity of these men
- Little did Lot know what would transpire next

⁴ Derek Kidner, *Tyndale OT Commentaries, Genesis*, 134.

We transition from the politeness shown to the angels to the perversion shown toward the angels

II. The demonstration of perversion toward the angels (4-5)

⁴ Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter;

No doubt the angels had not been in the home long before a commotion was heard outside the home

- The men had eaten their meal
- They were preparing for bed

Moses writes that “**the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter**”

- Imagine the scene as every man from the city of Sodom congregated outside Lot’s home!

The Text is clear that “**both young and old**” were present

- To be very specific, Moses writes, “**all the people from every quarter**” were present

At this time of the night, what would the men possibly want?

- Why were they gathered outside Lot’s home?

The answer is not what we want to hear

- But the answer is what we already know about the city of Sodom

⁵ and they called to Lot and said to him, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.’

The men who are gathered outside Lot’s home call out to him, asking, “**Where are the men who came to you tonight?**”

- Word spread fast in the city that two men had visited the city earlier that evening
- Everyone in the city knew that they were staying with Lot at his home

Of course, we know that this question was designed to be rhetorical, because the men know exactly where the two men were

- They answer their own question!

The men of Sodom tell Lot, “**Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them**”

- Many of your versions have the phrase, “that we may know them”

The word “**know**” has been used in Genesis with a definite sexual meaning

- “**Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain**” (4:1a)
- “**And Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch**” (4:17)
- “**And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth**” (4:25)

Of course, the word doesn’t always have a sexual overtone

- Some have suggested that its use here in 19:5 is not sexual

But the evidence weighs heavily in favor of the view that these men of Sodom wanted to have sexual relations with the two men who were in Lot's home⁵

- The words appears again with a clear sexual meaning in verse 8, “**Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man**”

Literally, they have not known man

- They were virgins

These men were brash and assertive in what they wanted

- They openly made known their homosexual intentions⁶

Homosexuality was already being practiced in the city

And it doesn't seem that just a few of the men were tainted by this sin

- Remember that verse 4 told us, “**the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter**”

The sin of homosexuality pervaded the entire city!

- In the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 1, “**the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error**” (1:27)

Sin was universally practiced throughout the city

- When God's judgment would soon fall upon the city, it would be universal as well⁷

Is it any wonder that God told Abraham, “**The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave**” (18:20)

Homosexuality is condemned in both the Old and New Testaments

- “**You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination**” (Lev 18:22)
- “**If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them**” (Lev 20:13)
- “**For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error**” (Rom 1:26-27)

In the OT, the penalty for homosexuality was death

- It was always viewed as a serious offense to God's Word

God had created the sexual relationship to be enjoyed in marriage between a man and a woman

- Homosexuality is a perversion of God's design

What a contrast to see the demonstration of politeness to the angels

- Then to see the demonstration of perversion toward the angels

⁵ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 2, 55.*

⁶ Kenneth A. Mathews, *NAC, Vol 1B, 235.*

⁷ Wenham, 55.

What would happen to the angels?

- How would Lot attempt to handle this situation?

III. The demonstration of protection of the angels (6-8)

⁶ But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him, ⁷ and said, 'Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. ⁸ Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.'

As a citizen and leader of the city, Lot steps outside in an attempt to rationalize with the men of Sodom

- He leaves the home and shuts the door behind him

No doubt, he stands in front of the door in an attempt to keep the men of Sodom from entering his home

- He is trying to protect his guests

In the back of his mind, Lot must have feared that this would happen

- Having lived in the city for several years, he knew the sinful tendencies of those within the city
- He knew that homosexuality was readily practiced

Lot addresses the men and says, "Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly"

- He addresses them on a friendly level, "Please, my brothers"
- He exhorts them to reconsider their plan, "do not act wickedly"

What Lot recommends next takes us off guard

- Let's read his own words, "Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof"

Can you believe this?

- A father *volunteers* his two virgin daughters to these savage homosexuals
- Lot tells the men of Sodom, "do to them whatever you like"

What father among us this morning would ever think of a thing like this?

- What father would *volunteer* to degrade his daughters like this?

Why in the world would Lot make such an offer?

- Well, there is a partial answer
- But in no way does it justify his scheme

In his day, the host was responsible for his guests

- Lot was responsible for the safety and well-being of his guests

No doubt, he felt a sense of responsibility toward these men as they entered the city

- Perhaps Lot knew in the back of his mind that something like this might happen
- Perhaps this is why Lot took the initiative to welcome them into his own home; otherwise, they may have been invited to the home of a homosexual

In a vain effort to protect his guests, Lot offers his two virgin daughters as a substitute

- He treats his guests with far greater honor than his own family⁸

It should so without saying that Lot's daughters were old enough to bear children

- We know this from the last part of chapter 19

For many years, Lot had protected his daughters

- No doubt, he had helped them to stay pure⁹

But in a split second, Lot was forced to make a decision¹⁰

- Would he protect his family and allow the men of Sodom to degrade his two guests?
- Or, would he protect his guests and sacrifice his two virgin daughters?

Let's pause the tape for a second

- Back in Genesis 13, there was a dispute between Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen
- There just wasn't enough land to sustain both of them

So a decision was made to split up

- They could no longer remain together in the same vicinity

Abraham had the right to choose where he wanted to live

- But he allowed Lot to have first choice

Abraham told Lot, "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me: if *to the left*, then I will go to the right; or if *to the right*, then I will go to the left" (13:9)

- "And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere – *this was* before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah – like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. ¹² Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom" (Gen 13:10-12)

Lot chose to live in the Jordan valley and "moved his tents as far as Sodom"

- Genesis 14:12 tells us that Lot was "living in Sodom"
- Genesis 19:1 tells us that Lot was "sitting in the gate of Sodom"

Lot knew what he was getting into

- He chose to live near and then in the city of Sodom
- No doubt he had seen firsthand the debauchery and degradation that was taking place

If Lot had chosen to live elsewhere, he would not be in this predicament

- If Lot had chosen to live somewhere other than Sodom, he would not have to choose between his guests and his family

Haven't we all been there before?

- Because of one sinful decision, we are forced to make a decision between two bad options
- Neither is what we would choose, but our previous decisions have forced us into a bad situation

⁸ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Genesis*, 149.

⁹ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 348.

¹⁰ Hamilton, 36.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹ And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary” (Gal 6:7-9)

- The principle of sowing and reaping isn't just for Lot
- That principle applies to you and me, beloved

Don't think for a second that your actions and decisions won't affect your future

- It may seem like you got away without any consequences of your sin
- But God has promised, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked”

That was a hard lesson for Lot

- And I assure you that it will be a hard lesson for us as well

So far, we have seen:

- The demonstration of politeness to the angels (19:1-3)
- The demonstration of perversion toward the angels (19:4-5)
- The demonstration of protection of the angels (19:6-8)

Lastly, we notice...

IV. The demonstration of preservation by the angels (9-11)

⁹ But they said, ‘Stand aside.’ Furthermore, they said, ‘This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.’ So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door.

Lot had given his proposal to the men of Sodom

- Instead of having homosexual relations with his two male guests, the men of Sodom could do whatever they pleased with Lot's two virgin daughters

The men of Sodom told Lot to “stand aside”

- You can visualize them attempting to shove Lot out of the way in an effort to get to the men in Lot's house

To say the least, the men of Sodom weren't impressed with Lot's proposal

- Instead of appeasing them, it infuriated them

Lot's proposal fell on deaf ears and hardened hearts¹¹

What the men tell Lot must have hurt him

- In a time of distress when he is trying to protect his guests, the men of Sodom tell him what they *really* think of him

Lot hears these piercing words, “This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them”

- They don't even call him by name
- He is referred to as “this one”

¹¹ Davis, 201.

Instead of being called a friend or leader, the men refer to him as “an alien”

- That’s fairly welcoming, isn’t it?

The men of Sodom continue by saying, “he is acting like a judge”

- Lot was not born in Sodom
- Although he thought that he had been accepted by the people of the city, Lot now understands that he has been an outcast the entire time

This angry crowd even threatens Lot by saying, “now we will treat you worse than them”

- Now infuriated by Lot’s comments, these men threaten to turn on Lot
- Perhaps they were willing to rape him in order to teach him a lesson

The result of this dialogue was that “they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door”

The same word for “pressed hard” was used back in verse 3, where Lot is said to have “urged” the men not to stay in the public square

- In both cases, someone had to act in the behalf of others, even against their will

The men of Sodom were close to breaking the door of the house

- You can imagine the chaotic situation that was taking place

¹⁰ But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. ¹¹ And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway.

We read that the angels inside Lot’s home protect Lot who is outside his own house

- *Ironic, isn’t it, that the one who sought to protect the angels is he himself protected by those same angels*

With supernatural strength, the angels pull Lot back inside the home and shut the door

- No doubt they were outnumbered as every man in the city was attempting to break the door down

The angels then “struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness”

- As another demonstration of their supernatural abilities, the two angels struck the men with blindness

This is an unusual word for blindness

- It doesn’t refer to total loss of sight
- Rather, it refers to a temporary disorientation

These two angels performed a work of salvation and judgment

- They saved Lot from the angry mob
- They also caused these men to be struck with blindness

But this was only a preliminary judgment¹²

- The worst was yet to come

It doesn’t appear that any of these men repented

- It doesn’t appear any was broken over his sin

¹² Hamilton, 37.

How long these men were blinded and disoriented, we are not told

- We do know that the angels immediately tell Lot to gather his family

What would the angels instruct Lot and his family to do?

- What would happen?

Well, we will continue this account next week

The sin of homosexuality is one that we often cringe at

- We think it to be dirty and obscene

While God is clearly opposed to the sin of homosexuality, let's be careful not to elevate it as the worst of sins

- Some have erroneously thought that homosexuals are somehow beyond the grip of God's grace
- That is dangerous – and unbiblical – thinking

Some of the believers in the church at Corinth were homosexuals at one point

- Paul wrote in the sixth chapter of 1 Corinthians, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (6:9-11, emphasis mine)

We so often point to that verse, looking primarily at the “big” sins

- “big” – according to our analysis and judgment
- Not necessarily based on God's Word

Let's remind ourselves of the sins that Paul mentions

- Fornicators – a heterosexual sin
- Idolaters
- Adulterers – a heterosexual sin
- Effeminate
- Homosexuals
- Thieves
- Covetous
- Drunkards
- Revilers
- Swindlers

Paul says that all of these “shall not inherit the kingdom of God”

- Not just homosexuals
- But with all sin!

What is the sin that will prevent a sinner from going to heaven?

- Homosexuality?
 - o No...unbelief!

Rejection of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is what causes one to be prevented from entrance into heaven

Beloved, let's guard ourselves this morning

- It is easy for us to hear this message about God's judgment against homosexuality
- That is because we are heterosexuals

But do you realize that God hates heterosexual sin as well?

- Adultery, fornication, impurity, immorality

We somehow cringe when we hear about homosexuality

- But we will prop our feet up and eat a bag of popcorn while watching a movie that involves sex between a man and a woman

We must keep in mind that the LORD intended this passage to be a warning to the nation of Israel

- Israel was to be different
- Israel was to obey God's Word

There was a constant and real danger for Israel to begin acting like the pagan nations around them

- God desired to use Israel to show the difference between those who followed Yahweh and those who didn't

If I asked you what the predominant sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was, you would probably say homosexuality

- The Bible lists other sins that characterized them as well¹³
 - o Social oppression
 - o Adultery
 - o Lying
 - o Assisting the criminal
 - o Arrogance
 - o Complacency
 - o Showing no pity on the needy

Even though we are not Israel, the Church needs to hear this warning

- We shouldn't separate ourselves from the world
- But we shouldn't allow the world to shape us, either

The apostle Peter wrote this about Lot, "righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men⁸ (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day with *their* lawless deeds)" (2 Pet 2:7-8)

- Two times in that passage, Lot is referred to as being "righteous"

Now we scratch our heads after reading Genesis 19, trying to determine how Lot could have been righteous

But there are some clues that hint toward his being different

- Lot was not a homosexual, like the rest of the men of Sodom
- Lot had kept his daughters virgins – he had not thrown morality out the window
- Lot showed incredible hospitality toward strangers – this was in keeping with the OT law

¹³ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 276.

We will see some more clues in the weeks ahead as we discuss Genesis 19

But Lot is presented as a warning to us

- It is very easy for us to love this world and its desires and enticements

But the apostle John has written, “Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17)

We are very much like Lot, aren't we?

- Although righteous, we have allowed the world to conform us and shape our morals

That is why this passage is so important for us to examine this morning

- It reveals the tendencies of the human heart

The Reformer John Calvin wrote that the human heart is an idol factory

- And Genesis 19 is an illustration of what our factories produce

Sinner friend, understand that God will judge all sinners on the day of judgment

- Not just homosexuals
- But all who reject Christ as Lord and Savior

No one except Christ can keep the Law perfectly

- We all fall short of the glory of God

We all need redemption

- And that can only come through Christ

Believer, let's examine our hearts this morning

- What sin characterizes you?
- Where do you need to repent?

Let's praise God for His grace in that He has changed our hearts

- Were it not for the grace of God, where would you and I be?
- Were it not for the grace of God, what sins would be dominating our lives?