**September 16, 2020 | A Study on Chapter 19 of the Book of Genesis**

**Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed**

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?” (2nd Cor. 6:14) Paul wrote these words in his second epistle to the church in Corinth which struggled in discipling members with varying degrees of Christian maturity. Certainly the early church attracted new members who brought with them the baggage of the previously unchurched. As Steve said in his message on Sunday, the issues they dealt with in ancient biblical times are still relevant today. I spoke with a church member recently who observed how important it is that young people choose Christian mates. While we cannot know the heart of Lot’s wife, it appears from our study of Genesis chapter 19 that she may not have shared Lot’s faith in God.

The chapter begins with the 2 angels who visited Abraham in chapter 18 arriving at Sodom where they encounter Lot sitting at the entrance to the city, Some speculate that this indicates that Lot may have held some sort of office in Sodom. David Guzik wrote: There was a steady progression of compromise in Lot’s life. He went from looking toward Sodom (Genesis 13:10), to pitching his tent toward Sodom (Genesis 13:12), to living in Sodom (Genesis 14:12) and losing everything. Now Lot sat in the gate at Sodom, indicating he was a civic leader. Others believe that Lot was actually an innkeeper in Sodom so it would be natural for him to greet visitors to the town. He welcomed the 2 angels in a similar fashion to his uncle Abraham offering them a meal and even lodging knowing the danger they faced if they remained outside during the night.

In stark contrast to the welcoming hospitality offered by Abraham and Lot, men of the town gather at Lot’s doorstep demanding that he turn his guests over to them so they could violate them. So depraved was the town that men young and old participated. Proverbs 22:6 says "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." Sodom had become so wicked that previous generations had not raised their sons in the ways of the Lord and young children were raised to believe that evil was normal. Ronald Reagan famously said that freedom is never more than one generation from extinction. The same can be said for Christianity, it must be taught to children at a young age by parents who love the Lord.

Lot’s response to the men of Sodom is unimaginable. He actually offers his virgin daughters to these men as substitutes for the 2 angels. While it is hard to reconcile this with Peter’s description of Lot as a righteous man (2nd Pet. 2:7-8), we must remember that believers are capable of sinful acts. Below is a link to an article addressing Lot’s behavior.

 <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=6&article=2400>

Fortunately, Lot’s daughters are spared as the men’s lust is unnatural. If the angels needed any additional proof the city deserved its fate, it was provided and they acted quickly. They first struck the men blind then turned their attention to Lot, imploring him to leave immediately with his family. Matthew Henry wrote: “They do not ask whether he knew any righteous ones in the city fit to be spared: no, they knew there were none; but they ask what relations he had there, that, whether righteous or unrighteous, they might be saved with him. Note, Bad people often fare the better in this world for the sake of their good relations.” Based on how the angels spoke to Lot there is a possibility that he had other daughters and sons who were not with him at the time. There were 2 men there described as Lot’s sons in law but it is likely that they were betrothed to Lot’s daughters and not yet married. They ignored the warnings and perished with the rest of the inhabitants of Sodom as well as those in Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim (Deut. 29:23).

Lot’s reaction is puzzling as he seemed to be in no hurry to leave. Henry wrote “It seems, though he did not make a jest of the warning given, as his sons-in-law did, yet he lingered, he trifled, he did not make so much haste as the case required. Thus many that are under some convictions about the misery of their spiritual state, and the necessity of a change, yet defer that needful work, and foolishly linger. Lot did so, and it might have been fatal to him it the angels had not laid hold of his hand, and brought him forth, and saved him with fear.”

Despite the angels’ instructions that they flee to the mountains, Lot asks to go to the town of Zoar instead. He says that Zoar is a “little one” referring not only to its size but the amount of sin present in the town relative to Sodom. Whether knowingly or not, Lot successfully interceded on behalf of Zoar as that town was spared from destruction. It may be that Lot saw living in this town as a compromise for his wife. As they fled from Sodom, his wife looked back and was turned to a pillar of salt. Whether she participated in the immorality of Sodom or regretted leaving her material possessions, she evidently preferred her life in Sodom to that of a new location (see Luke 17:32-33).

Lot and his daughters did not stay in Zoar, perhaps out of fear that after observing the sinful behavior of the residents he thought Zoar would also be destroyed. The chapter ends with his daughters committing the sin of incest with their drunken father. If indeed Lot and his wife were unequally yoked, it is not surprising that the product of their marriage was 2 daughters whose descendants became the Moabites and Ammonites which would wage war against Israel in the future.

While Paul warned about marriage with a nonbeliever, he also gave instructions on living with one. ”But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy” (1st Cor. 7:12-15.) It sometimes happens that either Christians marry a nonbeliever or one half of a nonbelieving couple becomes saved. Paul is saying that the Christian spouse is to remain in the marriage with the hope of influencing the nonbeliever to accept the free gift of salvation and that any children from the marriage will benefit from their parents remaining together.