

## Genesis 19A (2011)

- As we move into Chapter 19, and since I've been away, we should probably take a moment to remember what we've covered recently
  - In Chapter 18, God is teaching Abraham to understand better God's character and nature
    - He wants Abraham to be prepared to raise a people who would know and follow the Lord God
    - What's He teaching Abraham?
      - God is a God of both mercy and justice, lovingkindness and wrath, grace and judgment
      - God will hold the unrighteous under penalty for their sin
      - And He will grant mercy to His children by faith and rescue them from the coming judgment
    - And what better way to teach those lessons than to allow Abraham to see God at work in all those ways in the neighboring cesspools of Sodom and Gomorrah
      - For inside those cities Abraham knew there were both sinners and saints
      - Men who perverted God's creation and at least one man who stood opposed to sin
  - And so God announces – in Abraham's presence – that He will judge the city
    - And the rest of that encounter fell to Abraham to respond
    - And Abraham did respond, praying that the Lord would spare the entire city should a handful (10 people) of righteous be found in the city
      - The Lord agreed, but the request was really the wrong one for Abraham's sake
      - He wanted to save Lot and his family, but he didn't ask specifically for that outcome

- But we understand that God will turn all things to good, so we await to see what God will do with Abraham's request

**Gen. 19:1** Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.

**Gen. 19:2** 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." They said however, "No, but we shall spend the night in the square."

**Gen. 19:3** 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.

- As Chapter 19 opens, you might have noticed similarities to Chapter 18 in the way this chapter begins
  - For example, as Chapter 18 opened we found Abraham sitting in the doorway of his tent
    - The tent of Abraham has become a symbol in our study of Abraham's trust in and reliance upon God's promises
      - Hebrews tells us that Abraham steadfastly remained a nomad living in tents
      - This was his way of testifying to the culture that he was willing to wait for his reward in a heavenly future
    - Lot, on the other hand, is sitting in the gate of the city
      - The gate of a city was a multi-chambered room built within the entrance of the city wall
      - People who came from outside to conduct business with the city would be allowed into the city gate to meet with magistrates or other officials
      - So to "sit in the gate" meant to officiate as a city judge or other leader
      - Lot wasn't living a testimony of resting in the Lord; he was living a life that embraced the world
  - Notice the next parallel in the way Lot greets the angels
    - He rose from his place in the city and bowed down to meet them

- Did Lot recognize them as angels? Probably not at first, like Abraham before him
- It was likely unusual for men to visit Sodom given its reputation for sexual perversion
  - Any man venturing into this city was asking for serious trouble
  - So Lot was probably trying to coax the men into accompanying him to safety
- Perhaps this was Lot's reason for greeting them with such haste
  - Perhaps he was intent on rescuing any person who entered the city unaware of the danger
  - In fact, that could explain Lot's interest in sitting in the gate
  - Perhaps he was serving in this role precisely to intercept potential victims and warn them or rescue them
  - Lot for his part may have been given this prominent position after his uncle Abraham had saved the city
- So Lot extends an offer to the angels that they would stay with him and eat
  - Abraham extended a different offer, but he did so for different reasons
    - In Abraham's case, he wanted the honor and blessing to host a visitor
    - And after Abraham realized he was hosting the Lord and angels, he was undoubtedly grateful to have been visited
  - Lot extends his invitation to preserve the visitors' honor
    - The difference in these two accounts leaves us with the impression that energy and blessing are flowing in opposite directions
    - For Abraham, his pious obedient life had lead to a peaceful rest in his tent, ready to receive the Lord and receive His blessing
    - But Lot is sitting in the city, working in the world, and anxious to give something of blessing to the Lord's messengers

- Which person would you rather be?
  - The answer is obvious, isn't it?
- When Abraham made his offer, the Lord agreed
  - But when Lot made his offer, the angels initially answered no
    - This causes Lot to urge them even more strongly to stay with him
    - Finally, they agreed
  - Again, Lot has to expend greater energy
  - Throughout this story, take note of how hard Lot must work to obtain the things that come easily to Abraham
- Finally, notice that here Lot serves unleavened bread to his guests
  - Unleavened bread resembles a cracker, since it doesn't have yeast and isn't given time to rise
    - But in Chapter 18, Sarah is told to make bread cakes, including kneading the bread
    - This indicates a bread that rises into a cake, which requires many hours of preparation
  - Lot is under the stress and pressure to move the meal along quickly for fear that their evening will be interrupted
    - Abraham was calm and Lot was in a hurry
    - The contrast is so remarkable, especially since we know both men were men of faith
    - Both knew the Lord and trusted in His promises by faith, and yet each lived such different lives

**Gen. 19:4** 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;

**Gen. 19:5** 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 evening was late, and it was nearing time for sleep when Lot's house was surrounded

- The men of the city were at Lot's house seeking the visitors
  - Clearly, Sodom didn't get visitors very often, and when it did the news spread quickly
    - Within a few hours, the men of the city had organized and come to the house to accost the guests
    - The degree of depravity is truly stunning
    - Even today we rarely if ever see this kind of universal depravity
    - Truly this town had reached the depth of human sin
  - It's particularly sad to see that the group included both the young and the old men
    - Not even age had brought wisdom to this city
- From outside Lot's home they call to him demanding to see the visitors
  - And they say they want to have relations, which means they intend to gang rape these men
  - This is something we only expect to see in a prison
  - Now we see more clearly why Lot was so concerned for these men and was working so hard to keep them and feed them quickly
- How did Lot arrive at this kind of life?
  - He entered into a bargain with the world
  - In return for allowing him to live among them and enjoy their worldly successes and comforts, Lot traded his peace of mind and the quiet life of a man of faith
  - Paul commands believers to make it our ambition to lead a quiet life (1 Thess. 4:11)
  - And while Lot's experience is certainly an extreme example, it's an accurate representation of the challenges believers face when they marry themselves to the world

- And to be specific, Lot made choice after to choice to live like the unbeliever rather than to live in ways that typified God's people
- He adopted their lifestyle, he placed himself in harm's way
- And all the while Abraham made opposite choices
- Coming to a story like Lot and seeing the contrast between Lot and Abraham compels us to consider our own life choices
  - Every day we face choice after choice to either conform to God's word or conform to the world
    - Some occasions we choose for one and other times we choose for the other
  - Have you noticed that as you chase the world, life gets more hectic, more stressful, more challenging?
    - Obviously, following God can bring its own challenges and trials
    - Obedience isn't a guarantee of an easy life
  - Nevertheless, Scripture promises that the trials that come with faithful obedience will only serve to grow us and strengthen us, leaving us lacking nothing

[James 1:2](#) Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,  
[James 1:3](#) knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

[James 1:4](#) And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- The troubles that worldly living produces, on the other hand, will wear us down, take our energy and choke off our spiritual maturity
- Abraham is strong, steady, speaking with God and listening to His counsel
  - The Lord is inviting Abraham to know Him better and join in His work
  - And the Lord is bringing blessing to Abraham even when Abraham takes a misstep here and there

- Lot on the other hand is frazzled, fearful, stressed and tired from the never-ending effort to compensate for the sin of those he has surrounded himself with
  - The Lord isn't spending time with Lot, as is evident by the need to send these messengers on a fact finding tour
  - And when the Lord does visit Lot, it's a rescue mission in which Lot is called to leave the world behind

[Gen. 19:6](#) But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him,

[Gen. 19:7](#) and said, "Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly.

[Gen. 19:8](#) "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."

[Gen. 19:9](#) 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.

- Now we reach the most disturbing part of Lot's story (at least so far)
  - Lot is determined to save his guests from the humiliation – to say nothing of the violence – of this mob's attack
    - It's not hard to understand Lot's desire to protect his guests
    - But in the ancient east, it was supremely important for a host to care for the wellbeing of his guests
    - Lot understood this requirement all too well
      - He is determined to preserve his social responsibility and personal dignity
  - So he tries to go outside to reason with the unruly crowd
    - There are some important details in this passage
    - First, Lot calls these men his brothers
      - This is a revealing term
      - Lot has come to identify with these men as his brothers in some sense
    - Clearly, Lot isn't related to this men, so we know he didn't mean the term in the sense of physical brother

- In Genesis 13:8 Abraham had said he and Lot were brothers, in the sense that they were kin and should show love and regard for one another
- But now Lot calls these evil men of Sodom “brothers”
  - Not even Jesus was willing to call his earthly family His brothers

[Matt. 12:47](#) Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.”

[Matt. 12:48](#) But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?”

[Matt. 12:49](#) And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers!

[Matt. 12:50](#) “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

- But then in what way did he mean it?
  - Were these his friends?
  - Look at their response to his rebuke
    - They quickly distanced themselves from him
    - They called him an alien
    - While Lot wanted to call them brothers, they reminded him he wasn’t one of them
    - Then they pushed him forcefully to go past him into the house
- Obviously, they weren’t his brothers in any way
  - It’s becoming clear that Lot has forgotten which family is truly his family, the one where he should find his identity
  - But they were never fooled
- Don’t ever forget that as much as we might want to identify with friends in the unbelieving world, they will never accept us unless we leave behind everything that identifies us with our faith
  - The moment we start again to act according to our spiritual values they will disown us in an instant

- Our spiritual outlook will bring conviction and cause friction
- Ironically, we are the ones who are fooled, thinking we can find common ground
- Comically, Lot asks the crowd not to act wickedly
  - What possibility does this statement have of persuading the crowd?
  - If simply asking wicked people not to act wickedly worked, we wouldn't need jails
    - If this worked, why didn't he ask them a long time ago?
  - Obviously, it doesn't work and it didn't work here
  - Lot is unwilling to acknowledge that the people he has chosen to identify with are not his family and not his friends and do not share his values
- And then finally, we see the depths to which Lot is willing to share in the depravity of this city
  - Unbelievably, Lot offers the crowd his two virgin daughters instead of the men
    - As the father of an unmarried teenage daughter, I find Lot's statement incomprehensible
  - What was Lot thinking?
    - The first and obvious answer is that he viewed this option as the lesser of two evils, but that's still a pretty poor answer
    - How would he explain this decision to his daughters?
  - Most likely, Lot has weighed the two possible courses of action in terms of how it impacted his personal reputation
    - If he allows the guests to be raped, his reputation as a host will be ruined which would be a profound embarrassment
      - Notice his reference to the men having come "under my roof"

- If his daughters were assaulted, on the other hand, he and his family would be perceived as victims of a crime
  - His daughters would have been disgraced, unlikely to ever find a husband and probably injured or pregnant
  - But at least Lot would have preserved his social honor
- And it would be better for Lot to allow his daughters to become victims than to suffer social disgrace himself
- Whatever Lot was thinking, this offer speaks volumes about the state of the man's spirit and the corruption evident in his walk with the Lord
  - Lot was saved by God's grace, according to the word of God, but he was a sorry excuse of a follower of God
    - Lot is an example of what happens to men saved by grace but captivated by the world
    - I'm sure the first day Lot arrived in Sodom he wouldn't have offered his daughters to a strange crowd of men
    - We have to wonder how he avoided such an assault himself?
      - What kind of bargains did he have to make to stay safe from the homosexual rapists?
      - Given he was willing to offer his children, what wouldn't he have done to remain at peace in this city?
  - Over the 25 years he's been in this town, the constant barrage of sin has worn him down, and now he's become the kind of man willing to trade his daughters for strangers
    - Let Lot's long slow fall be a reminder for all of us
    - Bargaining with the world is like sleeping with the enemy
      - You have crawled into bed with something that wants to extinguish the light within you and crush your spirit
      - And you have to learn to sleep with one eye open, watching for the attacks
      - And as you grow weary in the fight, you begin to lose ground like Lot did

- The longer we play the game, the more tired we get, and eventually the world wins
- Give yourself over to Hollywood, and they hypnotize you
  - Sell your soul to the mall or the office or the golf course and they will also take your peace of mind and your spiritual energy
  - Like the seed that grows up around thorns that choke it off (Luke 8)
- If we associate ourselves with vice and vulgarity and crudeness and promiscuity and paganism and occultism and brutality and materialism, just watch what it does to our spiritual condition over time
  - Maybe the first year or two things go swell
  - But come back in 25 years, and maybe you too will be willing to sell your family to preserve your pride and chase away the demons in your life
- Why even go there?
  - Reflect on Abraham and his life instead
  - He wasn't perfect, but he stayed in his tent of dependence on the Lord
    - He rested in the Lord
      - The Lord's provision was always enough
      - The Lord's voice was all the praise he required
      - The Lord's visit was a lifetime of honor
    - And his peace came from looking to eternity for his fulfillment