

Escaping Darkness

Genesis 19:1-22

Well, when I began studying to teach this passage, I told my wife, and this sounds bad, but I told her, "This has to be the worst passage of scripture to teach." I know, it sounds sacrilegious; trust me when I say that I believe the whole Book is good. That's what I tell people who are struggling with where to start reading the Bible. "Just pick a spot and start reading; the whole Book's good." I tell you, though, the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah is something else. I wasn't looking forward to it. However, the longer I studied the larger elements of the passage, the more excited I got. There's some powerful teaching here, and we're going to get into it.

So, after I psyched myself up for it, I decided to go to the beach to do a little research. I'm kidding...sort of. I'll admit that I've always been a bit confused as to why folks so readily wear so little clothing just because they're in a different location, but that's a message for another day. Before we dive in further, I just want to lay out some background, some passages about the wicked city we've already studied. You'll remember that Abram and Lot has vast wealth and numerous livestock and servants between them. Contentions arose between their workers, so they parted ways, Abram giving Lot first choice of the land...

Genesis 13:11-13

11 So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. 12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.



While the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah have yet to be positively located, due to the proximity to Zoar (the location for which has been more reliably determined) along with the description of the bitumen pits in the "Valley of Siddim," many scholars believe Sodom and Gomorrah have been just below the southern end of the Dead Sea. This is where Lot chose to settle, inching his way closer and closer to these cities despite the well-known fact that "the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the

LORD," that combination of words meaning that they were NO ORDINARY SINNERS; they were wicked sinners that caused pain for others. Apparently cognizant of this, Abraham, still going by "Abram" at the time, settled in Canaan, specifically Hebron. This is where he was living when the battle of nine kings was fought, and Lot was taken prisoner...

Genesis 14:11-12

11 So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, WHO WAS DWELLING IN SODOM, and his possessions, and went their way.

So, now Lot's moved on into the city. Already we're beginning to see what I believe are very intentional contrasts being made between Lot and Abraham in scripture. Abraham is living the life of a sojourner in tents. He didn't put down roots because, as the writer of Hebrews describes, he was **"looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God"** (Hebrews 11:10). Lot had made this world his home, but Abraham wisely STEERED CLEAR of it. As we talk this evening about escaping darkness, we learn from Abraham response of avoiding known sources of wickedness while still caring about those ensnared by it. You remember that, last week, we saw that the outcry against the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was so great that the LORD was about to execute judgment on them...

Genesis 18:20-21

20 Then the Lord said, Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.

It's at this point that Abraham began to plead for the "righteous" of the cities, eventually getting the commitment from the LORD that He wouldn't destroy the cities if TEN RIGHTEOUS were found living there, and you know Lot was the one on his mind as he pleaded. Now we pick back up with the two investigating angels (like a supernatural buddy cop show, just without all the humor). So, picking up in verse one, we read...

Genesis 19:1-3

1 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth 2 and said, My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way. They said, No; we will spend the night in the town square. 3 But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

Again, more contrast. Abraham was visited BY THE LORD in the DAY (light). Lot is visited in the EVENING (darkness), but only by the angels. Despite Lot's attested righteousness, the LORD wasn't comfortable visiting him. When the scriptures say that **"Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom,"** it's indicating that he was a JUDGE or trusted businessman. The gate was a public place where legal and business transactions

were made, but we can assume he was a judge given a remark that the Sodomite men make about Lot later.

Notice Lot's intentions. He met the angels in the EVENING, and he told them, "Spend the night and wash your feet...RISE UP EARLY and GO on your way." He was attempting to get them in and out before anyone even knew they were there. He knew the stir their presence would cause! HE KNEW HOW THE MEN WOULD REACT IF THEY KNEW THESE "MEN" HAD ARRIVED. Therefore, he sought to AVOID THE SITUATION ALTOGETHER.

They initially turned him down, though. They had come to OBSERVE. What better place to do that than the town square? They knew they could take care of themselves, but Lot didn't, so he urged them to shelter safely in his home.

He made them a feast, and baked "unleavened bread" for them. We'll see this again upon the inception of the Passover, but it's clear that the baking of such bread was common beforehand. This scene actually lends meaning to the scene in Exodus. In this case, Lot received UNEXPECTED GUESTS, so in order to offer them bread, it had to be MADE HASTILY. The bread eaten on the night of the tenth plague, the Passover, was made in like manner, hastily, but because Israel's departure was IMMINENT. Lot's departure was imminent TOO, he just didn't know it yet. Lot's family and the angels ate, but the Bible says...

Genesis 19:4-5

4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. 5 And they called to Lot, Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.

The details that **"all the people to the last man, surrounded the house"** is ESSENTIALLY THE GUILTY VERDICT. EVERYONE, or at least EVERY MAN, gathered with WICKED INTENT outside Lot's door. Knowing about the righteous minimum God required to spare the city, we're already made aware that THERE'S NO HOPE FOR THEM. They're DOOMED. The angels were to PROCEED WITH JUDGMENT.

The Bible tells us that the Sodomite men's desire was to "know" these men spending the night with Lot's family. This phrase, "to know." is a Hebrew euphemism meaning to have sexual relations. This is how most Bible translations translate this phrase, but I appreciate how the NET Bible lays bare their wickedly forceful intentions by translating the same phrase **"TAKE CARNAL KNOWLEDGE OF THEM."** The NET Bible commentary points out that **"Their intent is to molest them, but their rhetoric tries to minimize their wickedness."** This is a ploy the devil uses frequently, especially today. He's good with words.

Pro-abortionists don't identify themselves as such; they're pro-CHOICE. That sounds better, right? To take you a step further from the LIFE that's being taken, they DEHUMANIZE the unborn BABY with the use of the word "fetus."

Not long ago, there was a PENNSYLVANIAN SEX THERAPIST advocating on social media (and she isn't the only one) for people to stop using the STIGMATIC LABEL of "pedophile," urging people to call them "minor attracted persons" instead. WHY?? I'm not advocating for the hatred or harm of anyone, but does such perversion really need to have the stigma lifted off of it? It's the same vile thing, but "minor attracted person" doesn't sound as bad, and that's the point. It's the next step.

The devil is good with words, and understand, the way we think doesn't just influence the way we speak, the way we speak influences the way we think. Do you remember when calling something "gay" was an insult? After that it was a joke. Then it was accepted. Swapping semantics to conceal the wickedness of something is nothing new. The Sodomite men used the phrase "to know" to minimize their wickedness, but their BRAZENNESS is on full display, and it's ABHORRENT. It's clear that their desires were HOMOSEXUAL in nature, but there are those who argue that the sin of Sodom wasn't homosexuality. Let's look at the evidence contrary to that politically motivated presupposition. After all the MEN of Sodom gathered outside Lot's house, demanding that he send out the MEN who were with him that they might "know them" SEXUALLY, the Bible says...

Genesis 19:6-8

6 Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, 7 and said, I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. 8 Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.

What in the world was he doing?! He was protecting a couple of good-looking strangers (I mean, the city seemed to think so), but he was more than willing to subject his daughters to that very abuse?! What was he thinking?! Well, as strange as it sounds, he was displaying hospitality, which in this time meant that, once offered and accepted, he was RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR SAFETY AND WELLBEING. That's what he was getting at when he said that **"they [had] come under the shelter of [his]roof."** The GLARING problem with his VERSION of hospitality, however, is that it was WARPED!

"Don't act so wickedly to these men! You can do whatever you want with my daughters, my own flesh and blood, the only ones I've specifically been tasked with protecting by God; do whatever you want with them, but don't do to these men what you'll do with my daughters!"

Thankfully, as we'll see in a moment, Lot ended up not having to follow through on his offer, but the fact that he even made it was a step TOO FAR. You know, this is another contrast. Lot offered his two daughters up to the depraved desires of the men of the world; Abraham would one day OFFER HIS ONLY SON TO GOD. These two had once sojourned together, and now they were literally NIGHT AND DAY different. Living in Sodom had clearly taken a toll on Lot's soul.

Like Abraham, Lot shouldn't have been anywhere near Sodom! As soon as he spoke the words *"Do whatever you want to my daughters"* to this vile bunch of men, the thought of *"What am I saying?!"*

should've hit him like a load of bricks. Even sadder is the fact that the gang of perverts had a better grasp on LOT'S HYPOCRISY than he did...

Genesis 19:9

But they said, Stand back! And they said, This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them. Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down.

As we read in verse one, Lot sat in the gate where business and legal transactions took place. This complaint by the men is further evidence that Lot's position in the community was JUDGE. What's more, though, is that he had just offered up his daughters knowing what they would experience IN ORDER TO PREVENT IT FROM HAPPENING TO THE ANGELS. The Sodomite men were now saying, "YOU are judging US?!"

Now, remember earlier when I said we were looking for evidence of the actual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. I know they had more than one (like all of us), but many argue that it wasn't homosexuality, but that's because they refuse to accept that it's a sin at all. However, what do we see? We see ALL THE MEN of the city demand to have SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH THE MEN (ANGELS) staying with Lot. They REFUSED THE OFFER OF HIS DAUGHTERS (which would have also been wickedness), opting to MOLEST LOT instead.

Homosexuality is the CHIEF SIN in view here. That isn't to say that it's a worse sin than any other, but it is to say that this passage, along with several others, declares that HOMOSEXUALITY IS SIN. Don't buy the lie of culture that it isn't, and don't buy the lie that, if you compromise your biblical convictions, you can win your wayward child (or whoever) back. Lot's life as a "righteous" person is still a testimony to the fact that sinful culture can have a stronger influence on the righteous, if we're not careful. So, how do we respond? How do we engage??? We actually sang about it this past Sunday...

***I wanna be near, near to your heart
Loving the world, hating the dark***

I love those lyrics! They remind me of Jude 23. Jesus' half-brother wrote...

Jude 23

Save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

"We were saved out of this world to go back into this world to see others saved out of this world, and THAT'S the only reason we're in this world," NOT to go back and CONTINUE INDULGING IN SIN. It's LOVE and FELLOWSHIP WITHOUT CONTAMINATION! I think of it in terms of how we look after one another when they're sick. You know what I'm talking about. Someone you know is sick as a dog, so you call or text to see if they need anything. Now, ordinarily, we all would turn down such offers

because we're hard, country people. But, in that moment, Gatorade, saltines, bananas, things like that would be a big help. So, they let you grab them a few things. Do you knock on the front door and wait on them to come? Do you go on in and sit down in their living room and shoot the breeze?

NO!!! You drop the goods on the porch and do a burnout leaving their driveway! You call them from the road! *"Hey! Left you some goodies on your porch. Love you guys! Praying for you! STAY HOME UNTIL YOU'RE BETTER."* True?! We do that because we love them, but WE DON'T WANT WHAT THEY'VE GOT! Get a little too close, and you wind up SELLING BUICKS right alongside them!

Seriously, though, what if we were to look at sin the same way? Sin in the lives of those around us. No, we don't look at THEM any differently! We love them, but WE DON'T WANT WHAT THEY'VE GOT because we have the Holy Spirit, and we know that what they've got, the sin that they allow to rule their lives, is not good for us.

Perhaps Lot thought he was having more of an impact on Sodom than Sodom was having on him, but the Sodomite men knew better. They were prepared to make an impact on him and his front door, BUT the Bible says...

Genesis 19:10-11

10 But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. 11 And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

The one who thought he was doing the rescuing was actually the one who needed to be rescued.

This is truly a DEPRAVED SCENE. These wicked men are going to force their way into Lot's house and upon his guests, and SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS GO OUT! You would think someone would've spoken up and said, "Yeah, I'm BLIND. I think I'm going to go home now." I mean, that's a pretty NOTICEABLE CHANGE! At that point, they should've disengaged and used what energy and wits they still had to find their way HOME or to BEG FOR FORGIVENESS and HEALING, but instead, THEY EXHAUSTED THEMSELVES TRYING TO FIND THE DOOR TO LOT'S HOUSE AND GET IN!!! That's sick puppy stuff right there.

Genesis 19:12-14

12 Then the men said to Lot, Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. 13 For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it. 14 So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, Up! Get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy the city. But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

From the EXHAUSTIVE DESCRIPTION of how EVERY MAN gathered to Lot's door to the way those same men EXHAUSTED THEMSELVES searching for the door after they were struck blind, the angels had seen all they needed to see. They were going to burn it to the ground. Their instructions: TELL EVERYONE

YOU LOVE WHAT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN!!! This is how Paul describes the gospel. He wrote to the Colossian believers that we're to WARN EVERY MAN (Colossians 1:28). Judgment is coming!!! If the rapture comes in our lifetime, the rest of the world faces seven horrific years of tribulation, tribulation that, by the midpoint, will leave HALF THE WORLD DEAD and many wanting to die but unable to do so. For those who die lost, there's HELL and then eternal torments in THE LAKE OF FIRE. "Warning" people of these terrible fates isn't "fear tactics," it's a LOVING REALITY CHECK because it's all TRUE.

Lot went to the only other people he could call "loved ones," his daughters' future husbands. They were fiancés because they were referred to as "sons-in-law" while the daughters were still virgins. They were BETROTHED. Earlier we saw that the Sodomite men were well aware of Lot's hypocrisy, but now he's confronted with it. When Lot warns them of the imminent destruction of the city they think he's messing with them. It's just one big joke, and most likely, he's the joke.

First off, he's okay with his daughters marrying a couple of buzzards, men who, when warned about judgment, think Lot's messing with them because they see nothing wrong with their lifestyle. Most likely, though, they couldn't take Lot seriously because of his blatant hypocrisy developed slowly over years of living in Sodom, even as we was trying to tell them how to be saved.

What is our testimony before the lost? Lot was "righteous," but at the end of the day, when he told people how to be saved, they couldn't take him seriously. Yes, I know we will occasionally witness to scoffers, folks who make themselves feel better about their unbelief by mocking the gospel. We can't do anything about their outlook but continue speaking truth and PRAYING, but we can live in such a way that we don't destroy our platform from which to preach the gospel. Paul speaks of "[walking] in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time" (Colossians 4:5). The lost world is watching to see if we live like we actually believe the claims we make. Has He REALLY changed our lives? Is He REALLY the most important thing to us? If you want to find out really quickly, go witness to family. After Lot's son's-in-law blow him off, the Bible says...

Genesis 19:15-22

15 As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city. 16 But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. 17 And as they brought them out, one said, Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away. 18 And Lot said to them, Oh, no, my lords. 19 Behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. 20 Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved! 21 He said to him, Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. 22 Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

“GET OUT!” they said. Destruction is IMMINENT! Separate from the wicked city once and for all, or experience their punishment with them. When wickedness hasn’t been avoided (like Abraham did) or abandoned once detected (what Lot SHOULD HAVE done), the only alternative is SEVERE. Jesus said that **“if your hand [or foot, or eye] causes you to sin, cut it off [or tear it out] because it’s better to live crippled, maimed, or blind than go to hell” (Mark 9:43-47)**. Now, we know Jesus wasn’t championing sanctification via mutilation; He was saying to TAKE DRASTIC MEASURES to overcome sin! What are you willing to do or give up to no longer be mastered by a certain sinful behavior? It might cost you money. It might cost you convenience or freedom. Your flesh (and those less concerned with holiness) will call such measures “legalistic,” but if it’s the means by which you overcome what the Bible calls sin, that plan is better than the one you don’t have. Kenneth Boa well said, **“It isn't a question of whether we are engaged in a spiritual warfare; the question is how effectively we are fighting.”** Don’t hold back in the fight to guard yourself and those you love from sin. You’re either fighting or giving in.

God showed tremendous grace on Lot and his family despite the fact that he lingered, as if he needed time to think. *“HMMM...stay and be obliterated, or escape wickedness and destruction???”* Aren’t you thankful that the LORD has what you need to overcome sin and darkness when you feel you’re spent? Aren’t you glad that He is conforming you into the image of His Son, finishing the good work He began when you first place your faith in Him? Never forget that victory is found, not in increased effort, but in increased SUBMISSION. Let Him lead you by the hand.

The angels told him and his family, “Don’t look back!!!” The word for “look” in this passage has to do with LONGING. The angels were saying, “Don’t be caught looking back and wishing you were still there and had those things.” The apostle John captured the same sentiment when he wrote, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world” (1 John 2:15a)**; like Sodom, it’s all going to burn (1 John 2:17).

The angels drug Lot and his family out of Sodom and told them where to go to be safe, but Lot still argued and sought his own way. Instead of fleeing into the mountains, he pleaded to go to Zoar, which means “insignificant.” Later we’ll see that, even though his request had been granted, he went back to the angels’ original instructions. Do you sense the ANGST that Lot lived with day in and day out? The “country living” his uncle enjoyed just wasn’t for him. He wanted “the good life,” and he believed it could only be had in Sodom and apparently through great compromise. In the end, does it sound like he had peace? Not at all! The apostle Peter even gives us further insight when he wrote...

2 Peter 2:8

for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard

Did you catch that? HE WAS TORMENTING HIS OWN SOUL! He’s the MISERABLE posterchild of the believer attempting to live one foot in Jesus and one foot in the world!!! Solomon said our hearts are something to guard. Paul taught that we’re to take our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. He taught that, like Abraham, we’re to avoid being taken captive by the world’s philosophy, bathing our lives instead with the water of the Word. None of this means that we’re to shun those of the world; it’s

only through us that they have a chance of hearing truth and escaping darkness themselves. As God's Word says, "**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good**" (Romans 12:21).