

Chapter 19.

There were only eight that entered the Ark of Noah. The rest, including his brothers and sisters, though faithfully warned by Noah, were destroyed by the Flood. Centuries later there were thousands saved from destruction by heeding the reluctant preaching of Jonah. What would God do with Abram's intercession? Even though Lot's belated testimony seemed insincere because it was not backed by a consistent, Godly life, those who heard it were held responsible to heed it. No, God could no longer righteously preserve the wicked cities on the fruitful valley plains east of Bethel. They had had ample warning. He would not spare them from His frightful judgement for the sake of one righteous man living in it. But that man would not perish in its destruction. God sent angelic rescuers for him and his family and not only for them but for any who would hear Lot's belated warning.

If Lot had died with the rest of Sodom, would he had perished? Would not his soul have gone to heaven with Noah's? Would not the judge of all the earth do right? But God's reputation as a righteous judge was at stake. Not the destiny of Lot's righteous soul.

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities is a well known fact though the destruction was so complete no ruins have been found. The Dead Sea itself, sunk far below the level of the fruitful Jordan valley that had attracted Lot, is now over a thousand feet lower than the ocean. It is a fitting marker of the judgement of God upon these notoriously sinful cities.

Sodom and Gomorrah are referred to repeatedly throughout scripture (47 verses, nine in the New Testament). They are always an example of man's entrenched sin, of God's displeasure with it and of God's persistent calls to mankind to repentance. The Lord Jesus Himself condemned the cities around the Sea of Galilee for refusing to receive His personal testimony to them saying Sodom and Gomorrah would have repented if they had been as privileged.

Matthew 10:15 *Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.*

11:23 *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*

Mark 6:11 *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.*

Luke 10:12 *But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable*

in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

We see also the terrible hold the world can have upon the soul of a righteous man.

1John 5:19 (NKJV) *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies [under the sway of] the wicked one.*

The Lord prayed for us before He went to the Cross.

John 17:15 *"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.*

16 *"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*

17 *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

19 *"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

Sodom had been warned. It had the testimony of Abram because he lived aloof from it. It was invaded and defeated by kings from the east and captives taken, Lot among them. Abram went to his rescue and in the process liberated all of the pagan captives. Sodom didn't take to heart its vulnerability to invaders despite the rescue by its godly neighbor. It simply returned to its godless, horrific, lustful practices. This chapter reveals the depth of their depravity, and God's righteousness in destroying and obliterating them. It's not a pleasant read!

Lot seemed to recognize the arriving visitors as angelic and treated them with great respect and hospitality. The "hospitality" offered by the men of the city was reason enough to destroy them. The claim by some ungodly groups today that God destroyed these cities for a trivial reason (their lack of hospitality) is patently foolish and is a brazen attack upon the holiness of God Himself. All mankind are accountable to the righteousness and mercy of the Creator-God of the Universe. Do they dare refuse to answer to Him or to recognize His intrinsic holiness. How long will He wait in His longsuffering, not willing that any should perish? How long?

How did Sodom and its neighbors reach the state in which Lot found them? In Romans 1 Paul reveals man's the downward course into depravity after the flood. It is marked by God's intervention bringing upon them the natural consequences of their self destructive acts from their perverted thinking. He is still intervening as the scenario is repeated civilization after civilization as they descend into utter, helpless godlessness all the while proclaiming their liberty and rights. Satan laughs, for he has wrested more sinners away from following his arch rival for the domination of all creation, the Man Jesus Christ.

The depravity of their surroundings had deeply affected Lot's daughters' moral discernment. They don't seem to

have had any. Had Lot tended to raising them in the fear of God?

Genesis 18:17....Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

The fearsome destruction of their lifelong home had left them with the impression they were the only means of perpetuating their father's lineage. Why was that important to them anyway? He had no heritage or land to pass down. Ah the pride in the heart of man is nurtured by the women too. As for their security, their rich, godly uncle Abram apparently did not enter their father's thoughts when he chose a place to settle after his flight. He was afraid, afraid here, afraid there, everywhere afraid and insecure. He had departed from the God he had once trusted and seemed unable to remember how to return. He allowed himself to become intoxicated and seduced by his own ungodly daughters. Having lost self control and natural inhibition he became the father of a son by each of them. They named their sons, not he. He apparently had little discernable further influence in his daughters' lives or in his sons' upbringing. Yet was not God there, ready and willing to step in and honor him if he had but humbled himself and appealed to Him? But we hear no more of Lot and see no evidence of godliness in his offspring. The two sons became the ancestors of two powerful tribes, the Moabites and the Ammonites, who neighbored the descendants of Abraham, often troubling them throughout their history. For instance, although not attacked by Israel, Balak, King of Moab, hired a willing

foreign prophet, Balaam, to curse Israel as they passed by on their approach to the promised land. See Numbers 22—25 and Micah 6:5. Failing to do so he succeeded in leading Israel into fornication with foreign women. Moabites and Ammonites were banned from the congregation of Israel. But later Ruth, the Moabitess, became the grandmother of David. And Ammonite women show up in the line of the kings. According to prophecy these nations identities will be preserved until the Great Tribulation after the Rapture. But they will then be conquered and punished by the Lord at the beginning of His Millennial reign.

By Ronald Canner, July 7, 2010

Recently in Minneapolis, Minnesota there was a convention of representatives from a major "main line" denomination. One of the objectives of this gathering was to determine whether homosexuals should be allowed to occupy positions of authority (bishops, etc.) in the denomination. The afternoon before the vote a small but dangerous funnel cloud dropped from a storm cloud and traveled an unusual south to north course though Minneapolis toward the convention center where the delegates were meeting. It scattered light damage for several miles before it rattled the roof of the building and went on its way. But as it passed it toppled the steeple spire with its cross from the large church building across the street leaving it dangling ignominiously. The church was of the same denomination as the convention meeting. Did God speak that day? If He did, few listened. The proposition under consideration was adopted. R. C.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?

Be not deceived:

**neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate,
nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves,
nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners,
shall inherit the kingdom of God.**

1Corintians 6:9, 10.