

Old Testament Stories

“Sodom”

Genesis 13:8-13; 18-19:29

☞ **What would you like to praise God for today?**

☞ **Pray for God’s guidance as you study**

1. Who is most patient in your family? What would it take to exhaust this person’s patience?

2. What impresses you most about Abraham in this story:

His boldness?

His compassion?

His influence on God?

3. In Abraham’s intercession, what do you admire enough to imitate?

4. What impresses you most about God in this story:

His confiding in Abraham?

His judgment?

His mercy?

5. Lot’s choice of Sodom is unfortunate, yet he is called a “righteous man” in 2 Peter 2:7. Why do you think the Bible would refer to him in this way:

Because he was living at odds with the lawless environment (Gen. 19:9)?

Because he was “sitting in the gateway” (19:1) as part of Sodom’s ruling council?

Because he had an “alien” reputation (19:9)

Because he still followed God as best he could in the circumstances (2 Peter 2:7-9)?

6. It is typically thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were condemned because of their immorality. Read Ezekiel 16:44-49. Of what sins (other than sexual immorality) were these communities guilty?

7. Flagrantly sinful lifestyles are built on repeated decisions to reject God. Read Romans 1:18-32 and Jude 3-7. How does a progression of sin lead to a lifestyle of sexual addiction and depravity?

8. Only surrender to God can set us free from sin. Some may have experienced this in dramatic ways, others in less obvious ways. However, the Bible makes it clear that we ALL are sinners. We ALL need God to save us from our sinful ways. How should Christians then regard those who are still living in sin apart from God? (2 Peter 3:3-10; Jude 17-22)

9. Why do the angels tell Lot to leave and not to look back (v. 17)? Why do you think that Lot's wife doesn't obey (v. 26)? Is her desire to have one last look so wrong? Read Luke 17:28-33 and 1 John 2:15-17.

10. How has God shown his patience with you? Do you think that patience will ever run out? What does this say about how we should regard our own impatience with others?

11. For whom is God calling you to intercede as Abraham did?

12. I believe my presence in my community or family has the effect of:
- fruitful "salt & light"?
- a dash of salt in the ocean?
- rubbing salt in a wound?

13. In order for salvation to come to my community, I am willing to:
- pray for it regularly?
- share my faith with others?
- get involved in the lives of those around me?
- contribute to the ministry of my church?
- engage in community work?

Prayer: For one another

LIFE GROUPS

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I ♦ Invite..... welcoming others to our fellowship
F ♦ Fellowship..... nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
E ♦ Evangelism..... reaching others with the hope of Christ

DID YOU KNOW?

The ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah have been discovered southeast of the Dead Sea. The modern names are Bab edh-Dhra, thought to be Sodom, and Numeira, thought to be Gomorrah. Both places were destroyed at the same time by an enormous conflagration. The destruction debris was about three feet thick. What brought about this awful calamity? Startling discoveries in the cemetery at Babe dh-Dhra revealed the cause. Archaeologists found that buildings used to bury the dead were burned by a fire that started on the roof.

What would cause every structure in the cemetery to be destroyed in this way? The answer to the mystery is found in the Bible “Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah – from the Lord out of the heavens” (Gen. 19:24). The only conceivable explanation for this unique discovery in the annals of archaeology is that burning debris fell on the buildings from the air. But how could such a thing happen?

There is ample evidence of subterranean deposits of a petroleum-based substance called bitumen, similar to asphalt, in the region south of the Dead Sea. Such material normally contains a high percentage of sulfur. It has been postulated by geologist Frederick Clapp that pressure from an earthquake could have caused the bitumen deposits to be forced out of the earth through a fault line. As it gushed out of the earth it could have been ignited by a spark or a surface fire. It would then fall to earth as a burning, fiery mass.

It was only after Clapp formulated this theory that Sodom and Gomorrah were found. It turns out that the sites are located exactly on a fault line along the eastern side of a plain south of the Dead Sea, so Clapp’s theory is entirely plausible. There is some evidence for this scenario from the Bible itself. Abraham viewed the destruction from a vantage point west of the Dead Sea. The Bible records what Abraham saw: “He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace” (Gen. 19:28). Dense smoke suggests smoke from a petroleum-based fire. Smoke rising like smoke from a furnace indicates a forced draft, such as would be expected from subterranean deposits being forced out of the ground under pressure.

excerpt from Associates for Biblical Research