

## Lot to Think About 4-29-07

Genesis 19:1-29

What a sad story is relayed to us in Genesis 19. As I began to work on the message, my heart was already burdened with the story out of Virginia Tech. Knowing that this story from Genesis is just as true, it is disturbing to think that man is so vile.

(Jeremiah 17:9) One man can just as easily be a whole community that gives themselves over to darkness. But perhaps what is most troublesome to me, are Lot's actions. That is because he is the one we relate to in this story. We see ourselves living in an increasingly corrupt society that pressures us to compromise our convictions to be accepted in it. I hope that we are doing a better job than Lot.

The story begins with the two angels that came with JHWH to visit Abraham entering the city. As I mentioned last week, the LORD did not have to come and see it. He already knew, but it was for our sakes that He says He steps into situations and sees the details. He wants us to know that He cannot be unjust. He considers every factor.

(Hebrews 4:13) You can be sure when the judgment of God strikes, God is not throwing caution to the wind and just being arbitrarily destructive. He knows of every soul affected, whether He is taking them home to be with Him, or sending them to reap what they have sown, He cannot be unjust. (Psalm 9:16) That is one thing you don't have to worry about.

Lot saw them enter the city and persuaded them not to stay in the town square. I don't think they were doing an evaluation of the spiritual climate of the city. Verse 13 tells us that they are there on a mission from God to destroy it. So why did they pretend they were going to stay there? It gave Lot a chance to show his concern for souls that ventured into the city. It was a chance for him to show he was different from its citizens and worth rescuing.

Once he got the "men" to enter his house, he served them a quick meal of unleavened bread. It wasn't long before word spread through the whole city that two men had come to the town and were in Lot's home. Young and old began to pound on the door, insisting that Lot send the men out so that they could use them sexually. If you wondered about the discussion of JHWH with Abraham, and the bargaining down to 10 righteous to spare the city, notice that all the men of the city are involved. (Genesis 19:4)

How sick is this? If you don't think similar things are happening today, you are uninformed. There are areas of our country, and other cities in the world that are on the verge of this same kind of behavior. Hearts and minds are so consumed with lust that they can think of nothing else. (Romans 1:27) Instead of waiting at the city gates, they wait at the local pub, nightclub, or casino for someone new. What is it within man that causes such a desire for depravity?

The Apostle Paul had seen it in the Greco-Roman culture. He wrote, <sup>18</sup> *They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.* <sup>19</sup> *Having lost all*

**Commented [notes1]:** 9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? Jer 17:9 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Heb 4:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 16 The LORD is known by his justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. Higgaiion. Selah Psalms 9:16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 13 because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it." Gen 19:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 4 Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom--both young and old--surrounded the house. Gen 19:4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Romans 1:27 (NIV)

*sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.* Ephesians 4:18-19 (NIV) How did Paul say they became ignorant? Through the hardening of their hearts! When the truth of God came to them, they turned away, choosing to find satisfaction in the creation rather than the Creator. When the Creator convicted them, they chose to deliberately turn away and grow harder. When He drew them to Himself, they pushed away. We have all done that. The hardhearted do it consistently, until there is no more sensitivity left in them. (2Peter 2:14)

Sexual sin is so destructive because it takes the body of another and uses it for one's own selfish pleasure. That desire does not care for the soul of the person it uses, only their physical ability to temporarily satisfy. (1Corinthians 6:18) That is why in so many stories, the one who abuses ends up hating the one abused. It happened with one of King David's own children. He thought he loved his half sister. When he took her against her will, he quickly changed to hating her. (2Samuel 13:15) The perpetrator imagines the person lives to please them, and when they find out that is not the case, their ego is crushed and their fantasy exposed for the selfish ugliness that it is. It is the all too common confusion of lust and love. It is a confusion that our society promotes constantly.

Under the guise of tolerance, certain factions in our society want to indoctrinate our children before they reach puberty that they might have any number of different sexual preferences and all are equal. If you want to confuse our children so that they try everything, that is a great start. To a large segment of our society, there is no such thing as sexual sin. In Scripture that reveals the mind of God, sexual sins are some of the most selfish and destructive. (1 Corinthians 6:13) That is why we read of this cry coming out of Sodom. Imagine what the lives of these individual men in this city are like, used and being used by one another as objects and not individuals with a soul. The trickery and treachery, the heartbreak and even bodily destruction, all declare the utter selfishness of man. Hurting people hurt people, and the viciousness of the cycle went deeper and deeper until all the men were competing for the new visitors to their town.

Our attitude toward those caught up in sexual sin should be one of compassion, recognizing that but for the grace of God, we could easily be deceived in that area of our thought life. At the same time we must be clear that God has something better for them. He can deliver them and set them free from enslaving lust. Like the men of this city, they will not want to hear that. In spite of the pain they are enslaved to the desires.

These men asked Lot what right he had to judge them. (Genesis 19:9) You've never heard that before, have you? No, we are not the judge, (Matthew 7:1) but God's word can certainly guide us from darkness to light. It can free us from the slavery of destructive sin if we will receive it. (Romans 6:6,7)

The only thing that would stop the men from breaking down the door was striking them blind. What a scene that must have been, as this throng of lust driven men suddenly went blind. Some translations say they exhausted themselves groping

**Commented [notes7]:** 14 With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed--an accursed brood!  
2 Peter 2:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** 18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.  
1 Cor 6:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 15 Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!"  
2 Sam 13:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes10]:** 13 "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"--but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.  
1 Cor 6:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 9 "Get out of our way," they replied. And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge! We'll treat you worse than them." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.  
Gen 19:9 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** 1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged."  
Matt 7:1 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--  
7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.  
Romans 6:6-7 (NIV)

around trying to find the door. (Genesis 19:11 KJV) What a picture of sexual addiction!

When we harden our heart toward others and use them like objects, there is no end to what we will do. That is why Ezekiel also mentions the oppression of the poor that went on in Sodom. (Ezekiel 16:49-50) Using people made in the image of God can be done physically, financially, and emotionally. Once we see people as mere objects, even enslavement and murder become options.

Why does it provoke the wrath of God? (Psalm 2:12) Understand that God is the standard of goodness. Every characteristic of God that we can reflect is good, compassionate, kind, merciful, loving, and even just. To use and destroy that which is made in the image of God, is to lash out at all goodness. There is a word for it, "evil". Evil is everything contrary to the good nature of God. Evil is a selfish ugliness that only takes while continually demanding more, and yet is never filled. Evil had permeated every nook and cranny of the hearts in Sodom, with the exception of one household. It was banging on that door as well. The angels had come none too soon.

One shock in this story is how Lot offered his daughters up! It may be that he knew the men did not want them. He may have been counting on their fearing the local law that said if a man violated a betrothed woman, he should be executed. It may be he had figured out that the "men" with him were angels and expected their intervention. I think the answer is much more frightening. Evil was beginning to work its way into Lot's life. He was beginning to think of himself first and others as mere objects to use, even his own children. It seems that he had not yet been participating in the depravity of the city, but to offer his daughters showed it had been capturing his mind.

Can we live in a culture and stay free of its influence? Who did Lot fellowship with? It is interesting that Abraham and JHWH got down to the number of 10 to spare a city. That was the number that later Jews would determine necessary to have a place worship. Without fellowship that gives us encouragement to stay strong, the culture works its way into our thinking and attitudes. (Hebrews 10:25) We need one another for encouragement and strength. We'll see the influence of Sodom in the interaction between the angels and Lot.

The angels asked if there was anyone else that was a part of their home. Lot had found men to marry his daughters. They were not yet married but were considered to be sons-in-law. Lot went out, walking amongst those men that were groping around blind. He found his sons-in-law. He told them what was about to happen. He urged them to escape with him, but they thought he was joking. (Genesis 19:14)

How could that be? I assume they were among those blinded men. Lot had probably searched the city over for men with at least some indication of goodness. These two were the best he had found for his daughters, but the message of destruction sounded like a joke to them. Maybe it was because the life of the messenger did not convict them of the reality of the message. They may have thought, "Why would angels tell Lot? He was just one of them." Did they justify their blindness thinking it

**Commented [notes14]:** 11 And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.  
Gen 19:11 (KJV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 49 "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy.  
50 They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.  
Ezek 16:49-50 (NIV)

**Commented [notes16]:** 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.  
Psalms 2:12 (NIV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.  
Heb 10:25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes18]:** 14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.  
Gen 19:14 (NIV)

had just gotten very dark? How hard would a heart have to be to stand there in that condition and refuse to believe?

Lot ran back to his house. The sky was beginning to brighten as dawn neared. The angels told them to flee to the mountains. <sup>16</sup> *When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them.* Genesis 19:16 (NIV) What is Lot's problem? Why would he hesitate? Everything he owned was there. The fame he had attained of a respected judge was there. What was his life worth if he lost everything? What would your life be worth if you lost everything? (James 4:14) The angels mercifully rushed them from their home and sent them to the mountains. Why? We see at the end of the passage that it is because of the intercession of Abraham. (Genesis 19:29) What does your intercession mean to those you are praying for? It can be the difference between life and death.

**Commented [notes19]:** 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.  
James 4:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** 29 So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.  
Gen 19:29 (NIV)

Lot began to argue. Abraham had dared to challenge God to save his nephew, but now Lot was challenging the angels because of his love of city life. He is about to lose everything he came to Sodom with, and he wants to stay in a city on the plain. He asked to be sent to Zoar, a little city. <sup>20</sup> *Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it--it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared.*" Genesis 19:20 (NIV) It seems that size has something to do with decadence. You will notice that the larger the city, the higher the crime rate tends to be. Sodom must have been a very large city. The angel acquiesced and Lot's family ran to Zoar. God spared that one city on the plain.

They made it there by dawn. The angel had warned them not to look back. <sup>24</sup> *Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah--from the LORD out of the heavens.* Genesis 19:24 (NIV) The area today is still full of sulfur that you can ignite. The once lush and beautiful plain became barren and the fresh water became some of the most mineral rich water in the world.

Except for the intercession of Abraham with YHWH, they would have been destroyed with it. <sup>29</sup> *So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.* Genesis 19:29 (NIV) Even then, Lot's wife refused the angel's warning. It is as if the hold of the city was so powerful, she could not help herself. Lot's wife looked back toward Sodom. She must have turned back from Zoar with a longing for relatives and possessions left behind and stood on the plain in the face of the blast. Jesus mentioned this in [Luke 17:31,32](#). In the day when He reveals Himself to the world, He warns us not to look back like Lot's wife. We are to remember that her love of things cost her her life.

**Commented [notes21]:** 31 On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything.  
32 Remember Lot's wife!  
Luke 17:31-32 (NIV)

The strangest thing about the story to me is not the depravity of the city, Lot's hesitation, or the way the city was destroyed, I believe all that because it's consistent with human nature and the evidence in the area, as well as because it is recorded in God's word. If I was tempted to doubt Scripture, it would be the verse in the New Testament that refers back to this. It is found in a parenthetical statement in 2Peter 2:7,8. <sup>7</sup> *and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives*

of lawless men <sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-- When I read this story, I don't see Lot as a righteous man. After all, he lived amongst that vile society every day, raised his family in it, offered his daughters up, seemed like a joke to his sons-in-law, and then hesitated to leave.

Peter was making a point that God can rescue the godly from temptation. (2Peter 2:9) He said that Lot's soul was troubled everyday by what he observed. So why didn't he leave that wicked place?

Consider that our story of Abraham has shown us clearly that righteousness is not based on how good we are, for none of us is up to God's standard of goodness. (Titus 3:5) Even as depraved as Lot seemed to be, he believed God, like his uncle. He did not rely on his own goodness, but trusted that God would make a way for him to be righteous. We know that was done almost 2000 years later on the cross. He looked ahead 2000 years like we look back 2000 years and count on the way Jesus made for us. (Romans 4:2,3)

Even as sin seemed to be sinking its talons into Lot, he was troubled, tormented, by all the lawlessness he saw around him. He was enticed and repelled at the same time. This is the condition of many young believers. The culture sings it Siren song but the new heart is repulsed by the evil actions and pain caused to others, drawn and yet repelled. The lie is so tantalizingly deceitful but the new heart cringes at the damage done to lives. Without the fellowship of godly people, Lot was beginning to sink into the culture. That is what that verse from Peter is about. God knows how to rescue those that are His. Is your spirit as tormented as Lot's because of the lawlessness you see around you?

As our culture perfects its justifications for sin, and paints the most beautiful picture ever painted over evil, we stand as righteous people in an increasingly enticing world. Judgment will come. I pray a revival will come first, but we may be headed straight to Armageddon. How do we keep from sinking into this culture? The rapture will rescue the godly out of a world of temptation like Lot was rescued, but that could be in our children's lifetime. What do we do now?

Making Jesus our priority in life goes without saying. The question is how do we do that? Here are some practical suggestions. Stay in fellowship. (1Thessalonians 5:11) Be accountable to one another. (James 5:16) We need the strength of our unity and love. We are encouraged to meet all the more as the day approaches. Why? We need it. Stay in the word. (Colossians 3:16) Sing songs of praise. If you will listen to the world's songs with a sensitive spirit, you will hear the Siren song in most of the lyrics. Counter it with godly music. There is plenty in every flavor. Begin and end each day in the Word. When you see a brother or sister straying, give them a call. (James 5:20) Share a Scripture them. We are in this together. Most of all, hear the instruction of the Holy Spirit as you pray. Let Him quicken Scripture to your mind. (John 14:26) That is our way of gathering some fresh manna every day. (John 6:51) Turn away from the enticement of the world and turn toward the things of the Spirit. (Colossians 3:2) Amen?

**Commented [notes22]:** 9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. [2 Peter 2:9 (NIV)]

**Commented [notes23]:** 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, Titus 3:5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes24]:** If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about-- but not before God. 3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." [Romans 4:2-3 (NIV)]

**Commented [notes25]:** 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. 1 Thess 5:11 (NIV)

**Commented [notes26]:** 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes27]:** 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. Col 3:16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. James 5:20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes29]:** 26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51 (NIV)

**Commented [notes31]:** 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. Col 3:2 (NIV)