

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Old Testament Lesson #13

[Editor's note: In this story, which actually begins at Genesis 18:1, God visits Abraham, but what Abraham sees are "three men." Chapter 19:1 identifies the two who go on to visit Sodom as "angels," so we assume the three were actually angels. In the visit with Abraham, the text suddenly changes to read, "the LORD said to Abraham ..." (18:13). It seems that in some sense, Abraham finally recognized that his visitors stood in the position of God.]

Three men visited Abraham and told of their plan to visit the city of Sodom to see if it was as evil as they had heard. They left for Sodom, but Abraham "remained standing before the LORD."

The judgment that would befall Sodom made Abraham afraid for his nephew, Lot, who lived in Sodom. Abraham asked, "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" The LORD said that if he found 50 righteous people in the city, he would not destroy it. Abraham pleaded with God until God said that if there were 10 righteous people there, he would not destroy it.

When the two angels arrived at Sodom, Lot met them at the gate and convinced them to stay at his house. Before they got to bed, the men of Sodom came to the house asking for the visitors, to mistreat them. They threatened Lot and tried to break down the door, but the angels reached out, grabbed Lot, pulled him into the house and struck the men of Sodom with blindness.

This was convincing enough for the angels — the city was so wicked that there was no remedy but to destroy it. They told Lot to flee with his family. The angels assisted Lot, his wife and his two daughters in leaving (his two sons-in-law refused to go) and warned them not to look back.

Lot pleaded to go the city of Zoar instead of to the mountains, and the angels allowed it. When he reached Zoar, the LORD rained down burning sulfur on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The land was reduced to a barren wilderness. Lot's wife looked back, and she was turned to a pillar of salt.

Early in the morning, Abraham arose and looked toward Sodom and saw the smoke of the city rising.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Hebrews 13:2 says, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."
- 2 Peter 2:7-8 speaks of how bothered Lot was by the evil people in Sodom.
- Jesus warned against turning back to godless things when he said, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32).
- The sin of Sodom is described by Ezekiel as "arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me" (Ezekiel 16:49-50).

Sodom and Gomorrah

- I. Three angels visited Abraham.
 - A. They wanted to see if Sodom was really wicked.
 - B. Abraham worried about his nephew Lot in Sodom and asked the LORD to spare the city if 10 righteous people were found.
- II. Two angels arrived in Sodom and stayed with Lot.
 - A. Men from the city went to Lot's house and were violent.
 - B. The angels struck the men with blindness.
 - C. The behavior of the men convinced the angels that Sodom should be destroyed.
- III. The angels helped Lot's family escape to Zoar.
- IV. God destroyed Sodom.
 - A. The city was a wasteland.
 - B. Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt.
 - C. Abraham saw the smoke from the city.

ANSWER KEY:

visitors, thought, men, angels, visit, city, evil, visitors, spoke, afraid, destroyed, destroy, city, righteous, people, save, righteous, people, angels, stayed, found, city, evil, remedy

The LORD rained burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah from the heavens and destroyed the cities. Lot's wife didn't obey the LORD; she looked back and became a pillar of salt.