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.