

The Lord Showed Mercy to Lot

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn that they will lose their testimony and will not be believed if they choose to imitate the actions of the wicked, as we saw that the sons-in-law of Lot did not believe him. We will also see additional consequences for Lot as we see how the past choices of Lot also had a great effect on the rest of his family.

In Genesis 19:15-17, we read, “When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, ‘Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.’ And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, ‘Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.’” In these verses, we see that Lot still did not understand the seriousness of his situation.

As the morning light dawned, the angels started urging Lot to take his wife and two daughters, who were with him in the house, and get out of the city quickly. They warned him that otherwise he would also be destroyed along with the city. Lot did not act like he even realized he would be destroyed with the city if he did not act quickly. Here, we see that Lot was waiting and not leaving the city. The word translated “while they lingered” means *to linger, tarry, wait, or delay*. In contrast to Lot, Psalm 119:60 says, “I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments.”

Finally, the two angels took the hands of Lot, his wife, and his two daughters and brought them out and set them outside of the city. This happened because the Lord chose to be merciful to Lot for the sake of Abraham. Genesis 19:29 says, “And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.” In this verse, we see why God was merciful to Lot. God remembered Abraham and the requests that Abraham had made for God to spare Sodom, even if there were only ten righteous people in the city. Even though there were not even ten, we see that God did have the angels take Lot, his wife, and the two daughters who were at the house and almost drag them out of the city so their lives would be spared.

Once they were out of the city, the angels told Lot, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.” Here, we see that God planned to destroy all of the cities that were in the plain because of their great sinfulness. Lot was given three instructions by the angel that spoke. First, the angel told Lot to take his wife and two daughters that the angels had brought out of the city and to, “Escape for your life!” Second, Lot was told, “Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain.” Third, Lot was told, “Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.” These three instructions were very clear.

Instead of obeying, Genesis 19:18-22 says, “Then Lot said to them, ‘Please, no, my lords! Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. See now, this city *is* near *enough* to flee to, and it *is* a little one; please let me escape

there (*is it not a little one?*) and my soul shall live.’ And he said to him, “See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.’ Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.” Here, we see that even though the angels had almost dragged them out of the city to save them from destruction, Lot was still not ready to obey.

Instead, we see that Lot still refused to flee as the angel had said to do. Lot chose to see if the angels would give him a city where he could flee to, instead of fleeing to the mountains. Lot said he recognized that the angels had shown favor to him by bringing him out of the city. The word translated “favor” means *favor, grace or acceptance*. He now asked the angel to magnify or increase the mercy and kindness the Lord and the angels had shown by sparing his life. Then, he gave an excuse to get what he wanted, instead of being obedient. He said that he could not escape to the mountains because some evil might overtake him in the mountains and he would die. Since God had spared his life by not destroying him with the city, he shows his lack of trust in God. Certainly, God would take care of him in the mountains just as he had protected him in the city. He just wanted his own desires.

He suggested, instead, that he flee to the city that they were near, since it was just a little city. He said he could enjoy his life in this little city. The fact that it was just a little city did not mean that it was any less evil than the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. We see that God had planned to destroy this little city as well. The angels said in verse 21, “...‘See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken.’” The angel said that because Lot had made this request for this little city, he would not destroy it. Many times, God showed mercy for a time, to either individuals or cities for which someone prayed. This is a reminder of the great mercy of God.

The angel told Lot, his wife, and his two daughters to escape quickly to that little city. The angel said he would not do anything until they had arrived at that little city. We also see that the statement of Lot gave the name of the city for which Lot asked God to show mercy. The name “Zoar” means *insignificance*. This was a small town that was viewed by others as insignificant or unimportant. Genesis 19:23-28 says, “The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.” In these verses, we see the consequences for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as the wife of Lot, for continued disobedience.

The sun had already come up by the time that Lot reached the city of Zoar. Then, the Lord brought judgment on the other cities of the plain. This was not a judgment that could be explained by natural events. Instead, it says that the Lord rained fire and brimstone out of the heavens. Brimstone is melted rock, like the melted rock that comes out of a volcano. However, this melted rock did not come from a volcano. Instead, we read that God rained the brimstone and fire from the heavens. The first heaven is the sky and atmosphere above us. The second heaven is where the sun, moon, and stars are located. The third heaven is where the throne of God is located. The Lord may have used something like a meteor to bring judgment, or He may have created something unique to bring judgment on Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding

cities.

We see that the judgment of these cities was very complete. It included the cities, all of the plain, all of the inhabitants, and everything that grew on the ground. We see that at least two other cities were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah. Deuteronomy 29:23 says, ““The whole land *is* brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and His wrath.”” Here, we see that Admah and Zeboiim were also destroyed. Researchers say evidence shows that this area is now under the south end of the Dead Sea. Before God destroyed these cities, Genesis 13:10 says, “And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.” After this destruction, this land became an empty waste land and eventually was covered by the Dead Sea.

The wife of Lot also became a part of that judgment. She chose to disobey the angels and looked back. This resulted in her becoming a pillar of salt. Her death is a continuing reminder of the judgment of those who are disobedient. Luke 17:32 says, “Remember Lot’s wife.” In this passage in Luke, Christ was warning that the future judgment will be like the judgments in the days of Noah and the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. In both cases, those who were judged were destroyed and only the righteous remained. At the same time, Abraham went to the place where he had pleaded with the Lord to save Sodom if only ten were righteous. Abraham looked toward the place where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had stood. The whole area was filled with smoke. The smoke was thick smoke like the smoke of a furnace. Abraham would learn later that Lot and his two daughters had escaped because God had shown mercy to Lot, but that everyone else had been destroyed.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that these cities were destroyed because of their sin. They also provide an example and warning to the cities that are filled with sin today. These cities provide a warning to all who continue to live in sin and rebellion against God. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to warn those who face the coming judgment.