

## “Sin and the City” (Genesis 19:1-38)

How many of you would like to get a tan this summer? In our society, there’s something culturally attractive about having a deep, dark tan. But here’s a sad reality. Noted dermatologist Michael Kalman warns, “Today’s deeply tanned beauties are tomorrow’s wrinkled prunes.” (Now, I’m sure he means that with all due respect.) If we’re aware at all of the research being done on the sun’s rays and the sensitivity of our skin, we know that we may one day pay a price for looking good.

Sin is like getting a tan. It may look and feel great today, but tomorrow it can bring consequences. In Genesis 19, we are going to be scorched with the insanity of sin! In this chapter, we will learn about the depravity of man, the judgment of God, and the failure of believers.

Our story begins in 19:1-3: **“Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. And he said, ‘Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant’s house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.’ They said however, ‘No, but we shall spend the night in the square.’ Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread,<sup>1</sup> and they ate.”** Verse 1 informs us that two angels came to Sodom **“in the evening.”** The evening scene is deliberately contrasted with the noontime scene when Abraham met these same angels (cf. 18:1).<sup>2</sup> These angels approached Lot at the **“gate of Sodom.”** The city gate was the place where the civic leaders met to finalize legal and business transactions.<sup>3</sup> It was a place of prominence and influence. The implication is Lot had achieved not only his material goals but also his social and political ambitions. He had arrived! Yet, at this moment he was not aware of what his earthly success would eventually cost him.

Keep in mind, Lot started well. In Genesis 12:4, he was a faithful member of Abraham’s entourage and trekked the full 800 miles from Ur to Canaan. Unfortunately, when Abraham selflessly presented Lot with a choice of land, he selfishly chose the lush land. Thus, he went from looking toward Sodom (13:10), to pitching his tent toward Sodom (13:12), to living in Sodom (14:12), to eventually becoming an important leader in Sodom. Lot could be a poster boy for spiritual compromise.<sup>4</sup> The fact that Lot had worked his way up to become one of Sodom’s leading citizens indicates that he was no longer a threat to their immoral way of life. The people of Sodom must have said, “Lot, we like you. You were smart to give up that nomadic existence because you have the gifts of leadership that we need here. And because you are a shrewd man, we’re willing to give you a place of honor at the city gate.”

Take note: You do not get honored in Sodom unless you have decided to be quiet about your faith. If you are so well thought of by the world that you compromise your testimony, you have paid too much for your success. If everyone likes you, you’re probably a quiet Christian. You may be like the Artic River, frozen over at the mouth. But if you talk about Jesus Christ and are willing to lovingly call sin “SIN,” I can assure you that you’re not going to be popular with everyone. Always beware of a politician who is popular and well liked across the board—that usually means he or she stands for nothing. The same is true with a Christian.

In 19:2-3, Lot invited these visitors into his home.<sup>5</sup> When they refused his invitation, Lot **“urged them strongly”** to enter his home.<sup>6</sup> Lot would not take “no” for an answer.<sup>7</sup> He did some major arm-twisting until they said “yes.”<sup>8</sup> Lot knew the wickedness of his city (cf. Judg 19:18-20). Undoubtedly, he had witnessed the abusive behavior of his fellow Sodomites toward other unsuspecting visitors.

So he insisted that these two angels in disguise spend the night in his home. Unfortunately, if Lot had hoped his guests had entered his home unnoticed, he was tragically mistaken.

In 19:4-7: **“Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; and they called to Lot and said to him, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations<sup>9</sup> with them.’ But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him, and said, ‘Please,<sup>10</sup> my brothers, do not act wickedly.”**<sup>11</sup> In 19:4, Moses attempts to emphasize that every man and boy in Sodom is dangerous and wicked. This seems over the top.<sup>12</sup> After all, most little boys do not practice homosexual rape. How was the perversion so widespread? We may not like the answer. Evidently, the older men disciplined the children in sexual deviance. Undoubtedly, there was sexual abuse in the home that caused the little boys to respond like they did. This tragic storyline continues today. In the US, one in three girls and one in four boys has been sexually abused before they reach the age of eighteen! Consequently, we live in a sexually confused society. Men, you can model and disciple your boys in purity or perversion. The choice is yours. However, if you choose the latter, your boys will turn into young men with all kinds of addictions that will alter their lives forever. Today, choose to intentionally model and disciple your boys (and girls) in purity.

Sodom and Gomorrah have become a proverbial symbol of wickedness, perversion, and moral depravity.<sup>13</sup> In 18:16-33, I addressed some unfamiliar sins that Sodom was guilty of: arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease that resulted in being unconcerned about the poor and needy (Isa 1:10, 17; Ezek 16:49-50). Yet the Scriptures also mention that they were guilty of rejecting God’s Word (Luke 10:8-12), adultery, lying, and abetting the criminal (Jer 23:14), and here homosexual perversion<sup>14</sup> (Ezek 16:44-59; Jude 6-7; 2 Pet 2:6-7).<sup>15</sup> Thus, this passage and several others clearly identify the practice of homosexuality as sinful (e.g., Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1:21-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:8-10). God’s original intent has not changed. From the very beginning, God ordained marriage between one man and one woman (Gen 1:27; 2:24). However, we must be careful not to imply that homosexuality is the vilest sin. From God’s perspective, sin is sin. That means the adulterer, the pornographer, the gossip, and the slanderer are just as guilty.

In 19:8, Lot responds to the Sodomites with a startling suggestion: **“Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.”** This offer is horrible and cannot be justified. We understand it a *little* more when we consider the low place of women in the pre-Christian world and the very high place of any guest in your home. It was understood a guest was to be protected more than your own family. However, Lot’s response is sick and wrong. I don’t have two daughters, I have one and I cannot even fathom what Lot is saying here. How could a father even make such a statement? It is against reason, against nature, and against love. It is against everything a father believes. How could a father make such an offer?<sup>16</sup> The only answer I find to be reasonable is that sin is insane. Even though Lot believed in God, he had been contaminated by the culture in which he lived. He did something he thought he would never do because sin is insane.

We have all had similar experiences. Have you ever said, “Well, Lord, I want You to forgive me for this sin. I have really struggled in this area of my life. I promise You that I will never do it again.” We have all made similar commitments. Guess what we did? We walked right out the door and fell in to that area of sin again. It doesn’t make sense—sin is insane! It doesn’t operate on logical, rational principles.

In this context, Lot (a believer) says, “You homosexuals (unbelievers) are wicked; here, rape my girls!” We’re often just as crooked as the unbelievers. The world mocks us because of all the hypocrisy they see in the church...and even in our lives. Their response to us is, “The Catholic priests are pedophiliacs.”

The mega- church pastors are involved in this or that. There are scandals everywhere. We don't claim to be Christians. Yet, you do and you're hypocrites."

This verse should remind us to be especially humble and gracious as we interact with unbelievers. Peter aptly said that judgment begins first with the household of God (1 Pet 4:17). We need to take the log out of our own eye (Matt 7:3).

Fortunately, the sick Sodomites did not take Lot up on his offer. Rather, they told him to, **“Stand aside.’ Furthermore, they said, ‘This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.’ So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway”**<sup>17</sup> (19:9-11). Lot may have had a degree of political power, but his spiritual influence was pathetic. The men of Sodom identified him as **“an alien.”**<sup>18</sup> Instead of being the salt of the earth, Lot had become tasteless and was good for nothing, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. Ironically, the two angels prevented Jesus' words in Matthew 5:13 from being fulfilled in their midst. As the men of Sodom were trying to break down the door, the two angels grabbed Lot, shut the door, and struck the perverts with blindness.<sup>19</sup>

In 19:12-14, Moses writes, **“Then the two men said to Lot, ‘Whom else have you here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place; for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it.’ Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, ‘Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy”**<sup>20</sup> **the city.’ But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting.”** In those twilight hours before sunrise, we can only imagine Lot's frantic effort to convince his own family of God's impending judgment. But because of his spiritual compromise, only his wife and two daughters were able to leave the city. Compromise had destroyed his testimony. In fact, Lot had lost such credibility with his sons-in-law that they treated his message as a joke.<sup>21</sup> Notice that we are not told that they refused to believe Lot so much as they did not even take him seriously. There seems to be only one possible explanation: Lot had never mentioned his faith before. His words were not a repetition of his lifelong warnings of sin and judgment—they are something totally new and novel. What a rebuke to the witness of Lot. It is one thing to warn men and have them reject our message. It is far worse for them not even to consider our words as spoken seriously.<sup>22</sup> The most serious moment of Lot's life was ridiculed by his children, who in effect said, **“Dad, you can't be for real! You're a joke!”**<sup>23</sup> This is logical, though. When you possess a tasteless testimony, your family is always the first to pick up on it! Do you have a sense of urgency when it comes to spiritual matters? Do your children and loved ones know that you are dead serious about escaping God's wrath? Do they know that you are banking everything on the person and work of Christ?

In 19:15-16, Moses writes, **“When morning dawned,”**<sup>24</sup> **the angels urged Lot, saying, ‘Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.’ But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the LORD was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city.”** Verse 15 strikes me so funny because the angels command Lot with the word **“up.”** This is my four-year-old daughter's favorite word. Whenever she sees me, she commands me by saying, **“up...up...up,”** until I take her in my arms, lift her up, and hold her. For Jena, it is a command of urgency. It was for the angels as well. The angels warn Lot. They tell him there are great consequences for sin but he delays responding to God. One would think that Lot would have been so overcome with gratefulness that he would have immediately obeyed the command to flee for the mountains; but urban life had its icy fingers around his throat.<sup>25</sup> Lot was so attached to this present world of family, friends,

power, and material things that he just could not bear the thought of leaving it all behind (see 1 John 2:15-17). He felt more secure inside an evil city than outside of it with God.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, God still exercises His “**compassion**” and delivers Lot. What a reminder to you and me that deliverance or salvation and Christian growth is dependent upon God’s mercy (Titus 3:5).

In 19:17-23 the account continues, “**When they had brought them outside, one said, ‘Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away.’** [See Luke 9:62.] ‘**Oh no, my lords! Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die; now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved.**’ He said to him, ‘**Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.**’ **Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar.**” Lot is saying, “I’ll run out of Vegas, but can I run to Reno.” He just can’t shake the city life. Lot flees temptation and then leaves a forwarding address. Amazingly, the angels give Lot over to his sinful behavior (Rom 1:24, 26, 28). This is yet another example of how divine grace, not human righteousness is the basis of God’s deliverance.

In 19:24-25, “**The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar.** [The sun motif is an Old Testament picture of God’s salvation.] **Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven, and He overthrew those cities,<sup>27</sup> and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.**<sup>28</sup> In the midst of God’s deliverance, we see His judgment. Three times in these two verses, Moses points to God’s sovereign initiative and judgment in obliterating these cities.<sup>29</sup> He did this...it was the work of His hands. Yet, many Christians like to say, “I am a Christian, but I’m not the “fire and brimstone” type. The problem with this statement is the Bible is full of God’s judgment. Thus, whether we like it or not, we must be “fire and brimstone” Christians. God is a God of judgment.

In 19:26, we come across an intriguing verse: “**But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.**” The Hebrew verb translated “**looked back**” signifies an intense gaze, not a passing glance (cf. 19:17).<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, in Luke 17:28-32, Jesus implies that Lot’s wife returned to Sodom: “It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. ‘Remember Lot’s wife.’”<sup>31</sup> She lost her life because of her reluctance to let go of her household stuff. She was a wife after Lot’s own heart. Her sorrow over her goods so fixated her that she could not or would not move. Perhaps she decided that she would be better dead than separated from her possessions.<sup>32</sup> Ethan Allen furnishings and Nordstrom’s attire consumed her. Ladies, is this a struggle for any of you? If it is, remember that all that Lot and his wife had gained by living in Sodom burned up like wood, hay, and stubble (cf. 1 Cor 3:10-15).

By the way, Mrs. Lot’s family never saw it happen. They had obeyed the warning about not looking behind them. Not until later did they realize what had occurred. There’s a definite lesson here about running from wrong: Even if others are disobedient, you must be obedient!<sup>33</sup>

In 19:27-29, Moses provides a parenthetical comment for us. “**Now Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD; and he looked down toward**

**Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace.<sup>34</sup> Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.”**

The substitution of Abraham for Lot in the phrase: **“God remembered Abraham,”** (19:29; cf. 8:1) makes an important theological point. Lot was not saved on his own merits but through Abraham’s intercession.<sup>35</sup> This is the second time Lot owes his life to his uncle (cf. 14:12-14). Previously, he was delivered from capture and now from death. Abraham prays and then trusts the Lord with the results. God hears and answers prayers.

We are to rescue those who have sold out to Sodom. We are to rescue those who are entrenched in their sin. There are two ways we must do this: Pray and act. Lot wasn’t destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah because of Abraham’s prayer (18:16-33; 19:27-29). It was James who said that the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much (Jas 5:16). In amazing fashion, God sovereignly used Abraham to accomplish His own purpose to save Lot. God loves to work through the prayers of His people. So who are you presently praying for God to rescue?

In 19:30-38, Moses records this tragic conclusion. **“Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, he and his two daughters. Then the firstborn said to the younger, ‘Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him that we may preserve our family through our father.’ So they made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; and he did not know<sup>36</sup> when she lay down or when she arose.<sup>37</sup> On the following day, the firstborn said to the younger, ‘Behold, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve our family through our father.’ So they made their father drink wine that night also, and the younger arose and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father.<sup>38</sup> [There is tragic irony in this section. In 19:8, Lot had offered his two virgin daughters to be victimized by the perverts of Sodom. Now later in the same account, these same daughters victimize a drunk Lot who carried out the very act which he himself had suggested to the men of Sodom—he lay with his own daughters.] **The firstborn bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. As for the younger, she also bore a son, and called his name<sup>39</sup> Ben-ammi; he is the father of the sons of Ammon to this day.”** Nine months later, Lot became a father and a grandfather at the same time. These two nations were born of this incestuous relationship. While God dealt kindly with these nations because of their relationship to Abraham (Deut 2:19), they were a continual source of grief and conflict to Abraham and his descendants. Zephaniah 2:9 informs us that eventually, these nations would suffer the same judgment as Sodom and Gomorrah.**

This account is one of the most graphic and repulsive in the Scriptures. Why does Moses include it in Genesis? For two reasons:

- First, to reveal the consequences of sin. Moab and Ammon provide the worst carnal seduction in the history of Israel (i.e., Baal-Peor, Num 25) and the cruelest religious perversion (i.e., Molech, Lev 18:21).
- Second, to demonstrate that the spiritual shallowness of parents is often duplicated and amplified in their children.<sup>40</sup> Evidently, trusting in God didn’t even occur to them. This is another indictment against Lot’s failed spiritual leadership. His daughters simply mirrored the spiritual

compromise of their father. Lot was able to take his daughters out of Sodom, but he was not able to take Sodom out of his daughters.

Later in Israel's history, the tribes of Moab and Ammon cause numerous problems for the people of God, even to becoming the enemies of God's people (as such they at one time were barred from entry into the assembly of the Lord for ten generations, cf. Deut 23:3). The Moabites and the Ammonites also became idol worshippers and even led the Israelites astray into idolatry (cf. 1 Kings 11:33). Yet, strangely, God at times protects the interests of the Moabites and the Ammonites (cf. Deut 2:9, 19, 37), perhaps because of His regard for Lot, the ancestor of those two nations—and God permits Moabite blood to be part of the line of the Messiah (cf. Ruth 1:4-5; 4:13, 17).<sup>41</sup> But in time, God uses what was evil for good as only He can (50:20). Eventually, out of the lineage of the godless Moabite race came a woman named Ruth, and subsequently Jesus Christ (Ruth 4:18-22; Matt 1:5).

Desperation and fear can make us do sinful things.<sup>42</sup> Yet, we are not much different than Lot's daughters. Have you ever said to God, "I must have a husband (or a wife) for my life to be meaningful"—or "I must have children," or "I must have a career," or "I must have good health," or whatever? If there is anything in your life that you must have, apart from God, then it is your idol. When push comes to shove and you have to choose between serving your idol and serving God, then you will find out where your real commitment lies.<sup>43</sup>

At this point, it is natural to ask: Is Lot a saint or an "ain't?" (I know this isn't proper.) The answer is: he is a "tainted saint." In 2 Pet 2:7-8, the apostle Peter calls Lot "righteous" three times in two verses. If he had not emphasized this fact, no one would believe Lot was saved. While Lot was righteous, there is very little or no fruit evident in his life. This is an example of a believer that will be saved yet as through fire (1 Cor 3:15)—he will be saved but singed. The life of Lot shows us that it is possible to have a saved soul and a wasted life.

How many of us are like Lot? We're Christians, yes. But we also want to have our part of the world. We must have our slice of the action. We feel that we can't possibly give it up completely; that would be simply too great a cost to bear. So, like Lot, we seek instead to do our best in a hopelessly compromised situation, trying to maintain dual citizenship in the world and in heaven.<sup>44</sup>

Ten years ago, Lori and I made a summer trip around the western half of the US. One of our stops was in Arizona, where we visited her grandparents. While we were there, it was very hot but since it was a dry heat we decided to lie out and enjoy the sun. After combing the landscape, we decided that the best place would be the roof. So we climbed the attic stairs, opened the hatch, and climbed up on the flat surface. We had music, sunglasses, and drinks. We were set! After a while, Lori decided to go in and spend some time with her grandparents. She urged me to go in as well. She warned me that I would get burned if I stayed out in the Arizona sun. I told her I would be fine. I assured her that I was man enough to handle it. I chose to stay out.

An hour and a half later when I woke up...I stood to my feet, eyed myself, and smiled at how good I looked. I was bronzed to perfection. So I headed downstairs feeling pretty smug only to be greeted by looks of horror! Lori and her grandparents wanted to know what on earth happened to me. I looked at my skin once again and sure enough I was a walking, talking lobster. You see, when I woke up and first looked at my skin, I was standing atop an adobe roof in the Arizona sun. I could not see how scorched I was. But when I went downstairs and was no longer blinded by the sun's deceiving rays, I could see what I had done to myself. For the next several days, I could hardly move or sleep. Lori had to apply the gel from Aloe Vera leaves to my sun-scorched body. I was miserable. Fortunately, the consequences for failing to heed Lori's warning were temporal. This is not so with warnings from the Lord. There can be both temporal and eternal ramifications for your actions.

Believer, sin is insane! It deceives, then defiles, and then destroys. If God is calling you to forsake sin today, respond to Him before irreparable damage occurs.

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## Suggested Reading on Same-Sex Attraction

### Overview

Robert Jeffress, *Hell? Yes!: And Other Outrageous Truths You can Still Believe* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2004), 93-118.

Erwin W. Lutzer, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage: 6 Things You Need to Know About What's Really at Stake* (Chicago: Moody, 2004).

N. Allan Moseley, *Thinking Against the Grain: Developing a Christian Worldview in a Culture of Myths* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 185-209.

Randy Newman, *Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004), 143-164.

### In-depth

Joe Dallas, *A Strong Delusion: Confronting the "Gay Christian" Movement* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1996).

James B. De Young, *Homosexuality: Contemporary Claims Examined in Light of the Bible and Other Ancient Literature and Law* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000).

Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yarhouse, *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church's Moral Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).

Jeffrey Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).

Thomas E. Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow? Comparison and Clarity in the Homosexual Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995).

Alan Sears and Craig Osten, *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principal Threat to Religious Freedom Today* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003).

Marion L. Soards, *Scripture and Homosexuality: Biblical Authority and the Church Today* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995).

James R. White and Jeffrey D. Niell, *The Same-Sex Controversy* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002).

Donald J. Wold, *Out of Order: Homosexuality in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).

Note: If you are interested in any of these books, I would encourage you to go to [www.addall.com](http://www.addall.com)

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This is called a “feast” but it is not a lavish meal like Abraham prepared (Gen 18:6-8).

<sup>2</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis: Tyndale OT Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1967), 131.

<sup>3</sup> See the use of the idiom “sitting in the gate” in 2 Sam 19:8; Jer 26:10; 38:7; 39:3.

<sup>4</sup> The most deadly sins do not leap upon us; they creep up on us.

<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Lot did not recognize these visitors as angels like Abraham did (Gen 18:1-3). His spiritual sensitivity was dulled.

<sup>6</sup> The phrase “urged them strongly” is a translation of the Hebrew verb *patsar* meaning “to press; to insist.” This word ironically foreshadows the hostile actions of the men of Sodom in Genesis 19:9 where they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door.

<sup>7</sup> Wenham translates this “He ‘manhandled’ them.” Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, Vol. 2: WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1994), 54.

<sup>8</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning & Blessing* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 270.

<sup>9</sup> Lit., “that we may know them.” The verb “know” (*yada*) was used of sexual intercourse, hence the translations “that we may have relations with them” (NASB) and “have sex with them” (NIV). Gay theologians argue that *yada* is only used 15 times to describe sexual understanding but it appears over 900 times as mental understanding. However, word usage statistics are not nearly as important as context. In Bible interpretation, “context is king.” Yet, it can also be argued that ten of the twelve usages of *yada* in Genesis refer to sexual intercourse (e.g., 4:1, 25).

<sup>10</sup> He who does not protest against evil is really cooperating with it.

<sup>11</sup> Extrabiblical literature such as the writings of Philo and Josephus cite homosexual conduct as the chief behavior for which Sodom was known. Thomas E. Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow? Comparison and Clarity in the Homosexual Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 88-89.

<sup>12</sup> Deffinbaugh writes, “This was not the ‘broad-minded’ tolerance of a city whose laws permitted such conduct between consenting adults in private. It was not even the shameless solicitation to sin. Rather, it was rape, and that of the worst form. Imagine it, a whole city, young and old. Surely judgment was due.”

Robert Deffinbaugh, *Genesis: From Paradise to Patriarchs*. Lesson 20: From a City Councilman to a Caveman Genesis 19:1-38 ([www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1997), 2.

<sup>13</sup> There are 27 references outside of Genesis where Sodom is mentioned. It is symbolic of gross immorality, deep depravity, and ultimate judgment. The act of homosexual intercourse derives its name from Sodom (i.e., Sodomy).

<sup>14</sup> Homosexuality is not only tolerated in our society, but its proponents have an aggressive agenda to normalize homosexuality as an acceptable, alternate lifestyle. Those who oppose them are berated as homophobic. And if you doubt their power to influence the culture, just remember that ten years ago, it was unthinkable to have TV characters that were homosexual. Now there are dozens! The apostle Paul traces the spiritual source of homosexuality to people’s failure to gratefully acknowledge God (Rom 1:21-27).

<sup>15</sup> The proverb in Ezekiel 16 begins at 16:44 and runs through 16:59. Sodom is mentioned not once but five times in this passage. The sins that they are guilty of are abomination, shame, wickedness, and lewdness. Obviously, these are sexual in nature.

<sup>16</sup> It is possible that Lot was hoping his daughters’ fiancées would come to their rescue or that the homosexual attackers would not be interested in his daughters. Bill T. Arnold, *Encountering the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 103.

<sup>17</sup> The Hebrew is a bit more descriptive. These men and boys were so persistent that despite their physical blindness they persisted to the point of weariness or exhaustion in their effort to satisfy their sexual cravings.

<sup>18</sup> The spiritual leaders in Jesus’ day did the same thing. In John 9:34: “They answered him, ‘You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?’ So they put him out.” As believers, we too will be hated. In John 15:18-19 Jesus says, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.”

<sup>19</sup> The angels affect a supernatural deliverance of Lot by drawing him inside the house, shutting the door, and smiting the men outside with “blindness,” a rare word that may indicate “a dazzled state,” or a combination of a partial blindness and a kind of mental bewilderment. Kidner, *Genesis*, 134. It occurs elsewhere only in 2 Kings 6:18.

<sup>20</sup> The word translated “destroy” (*shachath*) is the same word used twice in Genesis 6:13 of the judgment of the flood.

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<sup>21</sup> Ironically, the Hebrew word *kematzehak* that is literally translated “like one who was jesting” (margin, NASB) is the same root from which the name Isaac is derived, meaning “laughter.”

<sup>22</sup> Deffinbaugh, *Genesis*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Like gums injected with Novocain, their sensitivity to perversion had been deadened. Charles R. Swindoll, *Abraham: The Friend of God* (Fullerton, CA: Insight for Living, 1988), 79.

<sup>24</sup> Sailhamer observes, “In contrast to the account of the wickedness of the city of Sodom, which was placed in the darkness of night (vv. 2, 4-5), the setting of the rescue of Lot occurs at the break of day (v. 15). In turning the reader’s attention to such details, the writer draws on a common biblical image that pictures salvation as a sunrise dispelling the evil darkness (see comment on 1:2) and consequently provides a larger context for viewing the events of this chapter.” John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis: EBC* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), Electronic ed.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, *Genesis: Holman Old Testament Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 168.

<sup>26</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 278.

<sup>27</sup> Incidentally, although only Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned here, we know from Deuteronomy 29:23 (cf. Hos 11:8) that Admah and Zeboiim were also destroyed.

<sup>28</sup> Today, archeologists believe that these cities are buried under the Dead Sea.

<sup>29</sup> This is what it must have been like at Hiroshima and Nagasaki when the atomic bombs were dropped during World War II. They had no time to prepare. Destruction was sudden and complete. After World War II we realized (at least for awhile) how fragile life was. We realized that with one order, one push of a button, we could be destroyed instantly.

<sup>30</sup> Heb. *nabat* = “To regard with pleasure or affection.”

<sup>31</sup> John H. Walton, *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 480.

<sup>32</sup> Hughes, *Genesis*, 275.

<sup>33</sup> Swindoll, *Abraham*. 84.

<sup>34</sup> The picture of Abraham in Genesis 19:27-28 is similar to that of Moses interceding for Israel in the battle with the Amalekites (Exod 17:11-12).

<sup>35</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 59. Abraham rescued Lot twice: from the Mesopotamian kings (Gen 14:10-16) and from Sodom.

<sup>36</sup> Although, on two occasions, the text clearly says that Lot “did not know” (Gen 19:33, 35) what was happening, nevertheless, sin was conceived and the results of that sin were profound.

<sup>37</sup> The account is remarkably similar to the story of the last days of Noah after his rescue from the flood (9:20-27). There, as here, the patriarch became drunk with wine and uncovered himself in the presence of his children. In both narratives, the act had grave consequences. Thus at the close of the two great narratives of divine judgment, the flood and the destruction of Sodom, those who were saved from God’s wrath subsequently fell into a form of sin reminiscent of those who died in the judgment. This is a common theme in the prophetic literature (e.g., Isa 56-66; Mal 1).

<sup>38</sup> After reading Genesis 19 we should not be surprised to find frequent references to sexual deviation in the Mosaic Law (Lev 18:22-24; 20:13; Deut 23:17-18).

<sup>39</sup> Notice that Lot’s daughters named both of their sons—the father had lost control. Gangel, *Genesis*, 170.

<sup>40</sup> Gangel, *Genesis*, 170.

<sup>41</sup> Barry C. Davis, *Genesis* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Biblical Seminary unpublished class Notes, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> In the short time span of a day, Lot went from being a wealthy, influential civic leader in the great city of Sodom to being destitute, homeless, and living in a cave. A natural question is why didn’t Lot go back to Abraham? There are two likely reasons: First, Lot may have been proud and unwilling to admit he was wrong about Sodom (Prov 28:13). Second, Lot likely had a hardness of heart toward God. Carnal Christians don’t want to hang around vibrant, committed Christians.

<sup>43</sup> Ian M. Duguid, *Living in the Gap Between Promise and Reality* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 1999), 105.

<sup>44</sup> Ian M. Duguid, *Living in the Gap Between Promise and Reality*, 99.