

GENESIS

Chapter 19

God Rescues Lot

The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth ² and said, “My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way.” They said, “No; we will spend the night in the town square.” ³ But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. ⁴ But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. ⁵ And they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.” ⁶ Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, ⁷ and said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. ⁸ Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” ⁹ But they said, “Stand back!” And they said, “This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. ¹⁰ But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. ¹¹ And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door. ¹² Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. ¹³ For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.” ¹⁴ So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, “Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city.” But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. ¹⁵ As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.” ¹⁶ But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. ¹⁷ And as they brought them out, one said, “Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away.” ¹⁸ And Lot said to them, “Oh, no, my lords. ¹⁹ Behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. ²⁰ Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!” ²¹ He said to him, “Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. ²² Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

19:1 *The two angels.* The two “men” of 18:22. (TLSB)

Lot was sitting in the gate of the Sodom. Lot had probably become a member of Sodom’s ruling council, since a city gateway served as the administrative and judicial center where legal matters were discussed and prosecuted (see Ru 4:1–12). (CSB)

Focal point for community activity. (TLSB)

19:2 *My Lords* – Unlike Abraham, Lot recognized the visitors only as men. (TLSB)

spend the night – Lot knew the danger of spending the night in the city. (TLSB)

square. A large open space near the main city gateway (see 2Ch 32:6) where public gatherings were held. Important cities like Jerusalem could have two or more squares (see Ne 8:16). (CSB)

19:3 *baked unleavened bread*. So that it could be baked quickly (see 18:6; Ex 12:39). (CSB)

This was bread of the simplest kind. (TLSB)

19:5 *that we may know them*. Homosexuality was so characteristic of the men of Sodom (see Jude 7) that it is still often called sodomy. (CSB)

Homosexual lust burned among many of the men of Sodom. Cf Lv. 18:2; Rom. 1:27. (TLSB)

19:8 *have not known any man* – Unmarried, though betrothed to Sodomites (v. 14). (TLSB)

do with them what you please – Culture of hospitality made it unthinkable for Lot to abandon his guests. Yet righteous Lot's proposal was horribly wrong. Perhaps he sought what he regarded as the lesser of two evils (heterosexual rape instead of homosexual rape), but his suggestion was evil nonetheless. (TLSB)

under the shelter of my roof. Ancient hospitality obliged a host to protect his guests in every situation. (CSB)

19:9 *This fellow came to sojourn, and now he become the judge*. Centuries later, Moses was also considered an outsider and accused of setting himself up as a judge (see Ex 2:14; Ac 7:27). (CSB)

Lot was an outsider accused of setting himself up as a judge. Cf 2 Peter 2:7-8. (TLSB)

19:13 *we are about to destroy this place*. Sodom's wickedness had made it ripe for destruction (see Isa 3:9; Jer 23:14; La 4:6; Zep 2:8-9; 2Pe 2:6; Jude 7). (CSB)

19:14 *his sons-in-law thought he was jesting*. Lot apparently had lost his power of moral persuasion even among his family members. (CSB)

They did not believe Lot's warning. Luther: "The nearer the world is to destruction, the smugger it is" (AE 3:268). (TLSB)

19:16 *lingered*. Perhaps because of reluctance to leave his material possessions. (CSB)

Lot's faith weak. He hesitates to leave his possessions. (TLSB)

seized him him his wife and of his two daughters. The ten righteous people required to save Sodom (see 18:32) had now been reduced to four. (CSB)

the LORD being merciful to him. Deliverance is due to divine mercy, not to human righteousness (cf. Tit 3:5). (CSB)

Lot required special treatment because of his weakness. (TLSB)

Isaiah 42:3, “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice.”

19:17 *escape to the hills* – Higher elevations to the east. (TLSB)

19:19 *I cannot escape to the hills* – Here again we see how presumptuous a weak faith can be. Instead of recognizing that it was pure grace that had spared his life Lot asked for further concessions. (PBC)

Lot bases his plea on the favor that has been bestowed on him. He reinforces it by a plea of physical inability to reach the mountains. He claims the evil from which God is delivering his will overtake him nevertheless – not a very commendable attitude. (Leupold)

19:20 *this city* – Zoar literally means “tiny place”; a small settlement at the southern end of the Salt Sea. Cf v. 22. (TLSB)

it is a little one – Lot pleaded that the small city be spared because the evil there was small. (TLSB)

It almost taxes the reader’s patience to bear with this long-winded plea at a moment of such extreme danger. Lot appreciated but little what was being done for him. (Leupold)

19:21 *I grant you this favor* – Literally, “lift up your face”; to cheer him with kindness. Luther: “Here one can see how great the power of prayer is, inasmuch as Lot rejects that last command – about ascending this hills – when he pleads his exigency (urgency)...To be sure, God gives all things out of free mercy; yet He wants to be entreated” (AE 3:287). (TLSB)

19:1–22 Lot and his small family are spared the destruction of Sodom, but the deliverance clearly is due to divine mercy and not human righteousness, as Lot’s behavior shows. Just as Lot’s rescue makes sense only when contrasted with Sodom’s destruction, so also our salvation by Christ’s death makes sense only when contrasted with the threats of God’s Law. • Lord God, thank You for Your long-suffering when we, like Lot, are weak in faith. Amen. (TLSB)

God Destroys Sodom

23 The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. 26 But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. 27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. 28 And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace. 29 So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.

19:24 *the Lord* - The Son of God, who spoke with Abraham (18:22-23), rained down from His heavenly Father, the First Person of the Godhead. Ambrose: “The Lord rains down from the Lord; the Lord grants mercy from the Lord. The Lord is neither divided when He rains from the Lord, nor is there a separation when He grants mercy from the Lord, but in each case the oneness of the Lordship is expressed. (NPNF2). Chemnitz: “Wherever you in Scripture that God is speaking about God as a person about a person, there you are safe in affirming that the three persons of the Diety are indicated” (LTh 1:67). (TLSB)

rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur. Perhaps from a violent earthquake spewing up asphalt, such as is still found in this region. (CSB)

Perhaps burning brimstone or pitch falling from the sky, lightning igniting coal-enriched soil, or a volcanic eruption. (TLSB)

Sodom and Gomorrah – God also destroyed Admah and Zeboiim, other cities from the region. (TLSB)

Although only Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned, we learn from Deut 29:23; cf. Hos. 11:8, that Admah and Zeboiim were involved as well. By adding Zoar to the group we have the so-called Five Cities, i.e., Pentapolis; cf. 14:2, 9. Of course Zoar was spared. (Leupold)

19:25 *overthrew* – Literally, “turned over,” as with a griddle cake. Perhaps as an earthquake was also involved. (TLSB)

Whatever means God used, the fact remains that this was a miracle of divine judgment. When the first two atomic bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there were survivors. When Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed there were no survivors, except for the four members of Lot’s family. (PBC)

19:26 *Lot’s wife...looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.* Her disobedient hesitation (see v. 17) became proverbial in later generations (see Lk 17:32). Even today, grotesque salt formations near the southern end of the Dead Sea are reminders of her folly. (CSB)

Reluctant to leave, falling behind, and disobeying clear instructions, Lot’s wife was engulfed by the devastation. Clement of Rome (1st Epistle): “Those who are of a double mind, and who distrust the power of God bring down judgment on themselves.

19:27 Abraham went to see whether Lot’s household had perished. (TLSB)

19:29 *God...remembered Abraham.* Hebrew is *zakar*. It means “to recall” or “keep in mind.” God could not forget His covenant with His people. When He “remembers” them, He actively works to keep His promise to protect and save them. (TLSB p. 843)

sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. Lot’s deliverance was the main concern of Abraham’s prayer (18:23–32), which God now answered. (CSB)

19:23–29 God grants Abraham’s prayer by preserving the lives of Lot and his daughters. In the destruction of Sodom and the neighboring cities, we see that wicked behavior on earth cries out to God for judgment. This judgment sometimes comes by catastrophic events. But just as clearly, we see God’s patient love for His children on earth, even when their response to His grace is weak and pitiful, as in the case of Lot and his family. • Heavenly Father, thank You for Your patience. Deliver us from evil, for Jesus’ sake. Amen. (TLSB)

Lot and His Daughters

30 Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. **31** And 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 all the earth. **32** Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father.” **33** So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn

went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose. 34 The next 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 offspring from our father.” 35 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. 36 Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. 37 The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day. 38 The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

19:30 Although God had granted Zoar as an asylum, Lot went to the hills that originally were to be his destination. (TLSB)

19:31 *not a man on earth too come into us* – In their little world of fear, the daughters became convinced that prospects and childbearing no longer existed. (TLSB)

19:32 *wine* – The family had spent sufficient time in Zoar to have provisions for a long stay in the cave. (TLSB)

preserve offspring from our father – Caught up in their fear, they felt compelled to preserve what remained of their family line. Their scheme of incest is one fitting for the depraved Sodomites, who clearly influenced them. (TLSB)

19:33 *they made their father to drink wine that night*. Though Lot’s role was somewhat passive, he bore the basic responsibility for the drunkenness and incest that eventually resulted in his two daughters’ becoming pregnant by him (see v. 36). (CSB)

Lot’s role, though inexcusable, was passive, carried out in a drunken stupor. See Noah’s sin and its consequences, 9:20–27. (TLSB)

19:36–38 The sons born to Lot’s daughters were the ancestors of the Moabites and Ammonites (see Dt 2:9, 19), two nations that were to become bitter enemies of Abraham’s descendants (see, e.g., 1Sa 14:47; 2Ch 20:1). (CSB)

Lot’s daughters felt no shame. They gave names to their sons that would memorialize their conception. (TLSB)

19:37 The Lord later ordered the Israelites not to touch Moabite territory because of their descent from Lot (Deut. 23:3-5).

19:30–38 Lot and his daughters, driven by weakness and fear, resort to evil means to preserve the family line. They demonstrate no regret, as if the end justifies the means. And still God is patient, even granting protection to their offspring. Weak Christians often resort to an “end justifies the means” solution when they feel they must take matters into their own hands, disregarding God’s clear will. God calls us to repent of this. In His grace, through the perfect life, death, and resurrection of His Son, God has provided us with the means to the best of ends: eternal life and blessedness. • “Remove the pow’r of sin from me And cleanse all my impurity That I may have the strength and will Temptations of the flesh to still.” Amen. (LSB 704:2) (TLSB)