

Genesis

Lesson 9 Intercession and Judgment Genesis 18–19

Memorize the TRUTH!

**Is anything too hard for the Lord?
I will return to you at the appointed
time next year and Sarah
will have a son.
Genesis 18:14**

A Visit from God – Genesis 18:1-15

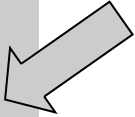
Day 1

1. a. What clues to the visitors' identity does the text give?

b. What was Abraham's immediate response to his unexpected visitors?
2. a. What important announcement did the Lord make at this time?

b. How did Sarah react and what caused her to react that way?
3. Have you ever doubted God's Word because it sounded impossible? What has God done to strengthen your faith in His Word?

Learn the TRUTH!



Although God is all-powerful, He will never do anything that is contrary to His character or outside of His plans and purpose. As you study this week's lesson, reflect on what you are learning about God's character and His will, and don't be afraid to ask Him for the desires of your heart. You may be surprised by joy!

God Shares His Plans – Genesis 18:16-21

Day 2

4. Why did God choose to tell Abraham His plans for Sodom and Gomorrah?
5. a. What does James 2:23 tell us about God's relationship with Abraham?

b. How would this affect God's decision to tell Abraham what He was about to do?
6. Can you recall and share a time when God seemed to speak to you personally, either through His Word or some other means? How did that experience impact your relationship with God?

Interceding Before God
Genesis 17:9-14

Day 3

7. a. Who do you think Abraham was thinking of when he interceded for the "righteous people" in Sodom?
- b. On what grounds did he make his requests?
- c. What was God's response?
8. What attribute of God do you see in this chapter that is especially meaningful to you? Why?

Wickedness of Sodom
Genesis 19:1-14

Day 4

9. What did Lot do to ensure the visitors' safety and welfare?
10. a. How are the Sodomites' true feelings about Lot revealed in this passage?
- b. Why do you think they had tolerated Lot until now?
11. What practices that are legal and accepted by the majority of our own society also deserve God's judgment?
12. In verse 14, even Lot's family didn't take him seriously. What actions or attitudes could have caused him to lose credibility even with his own family?

Lot and His Daughters
Genesis 19:15-38

Day 5

13. Why do you think Lot's wife looked back?
14. a. What problem did Lot's daughters feel they had?
- b. Do you think their concern was justified? Why or why not?
- c. How did Lot choose to solve their problem?
15. What two nations descended from the immorally conceived offspring of Lot's daughters?

Live the TRUTH!

We see in Genesis 18 the first instance of intercessory prayer. Intercessors must approach God as Abraham did, with reverence, boldness and persistence. We can intercede with the expectation that God will answer if we are asking in accordance with His will. Our source for knowing that is His written Word. There are nations, governments and countless people who desperately need us to intercede before the throne of God for them. Let Abraham's example encourage us to do so.

Commentary Genesis Lesson 9

God again visits Abraham, who is living near Hebron. At first Abraham seems not to recognize the Lord, who appears as a man accompanied by two other men. The two who accompany Him are identified as angels in Hebrews 19:1. Abraham regards his visitors as distinguished individuals at the very least and begs for the privilege of showing them his best hospitality. A choice calf is prepared. Sarah bakes fresh bread. Though he is head of a sizable clan and an important man, Abraham serves as the waiter.

When the guests inquire about Sarah by name, Abraham is convinced that he is entertaining divine representatives. God reveals Himself in His statement in 18:10, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Sarah, who is eavesdropping on the conversation, hears that she is to bear a son, a physical impossibility for a post-menopausal woman. She laughs to herself. Yet God has been faithful to every statement. Why should she doubt Him now? God therefore finds her laughter offensive, and says so to Abraham. Sarah compounds the blunder by denying that she laughed. The Lord rebukes her. The human condition is so bad that people try to lie to God Himself. When God asks whether anything is too "hard" for Him, He reminds Abraham that His power is limitless, regardless of Sarah's laughter.

Only a short distance east of Hebron is the Dead Sea, with the communities of Sodom and Gomorrah. As Abraham's visitors leave, he walks with them toward the valley. God uses this intimate situation to reveal a grave matter. Many people have been complaining, either in prayer or otherwise, about the horrible situation in the two towns, though the grievous sins are not named. God refuses to judge the towns simply because of those complaints; He is determined to discover firsthand their exact moral condition.

Genesis 18:22 says, "Abraham remained standing before the Lord." To stand before someone, in the Hebrew Bible, often suggests prayer. Abraham is about to save lives by praying for people, a ministry that every believer in Jesus Christ is called to join (1 Timothy 2:1). Those who intercede imitate the Lord Jesus Himself, who hung on the cross and prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

Abraham has a personal interest in Sodom, because his nephew Lot lives there. Abraham knows that whatever Lot's failings are, he is a true worshiper of God and a man who hates the godless behavior of his neighbors (see 2 Peter 2:7-8). Abraham begins to intercede. Praying for others is an important way that people of God can spread His blessings upon those around them.

Knowing God as he does, it is unthinkable that the righteous "Judge of all the earth" should deal with humanity unjustly. To "sweep away the righteous with the wicked" is inconsistent with God's character. Abraham suggests that even 10 righteous people might live there: Would God destroy the 10 righteous along with the wicked? God agrees to spare the city for the sake of even 10 righteous people. Eventually, not even 10 are found, but Lot and his family are spared by being evacuated from the city.

Check It Out:

God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient; that is, all-powerful, present everywhere, and all-knowing. Therefore, we can assume He knew exactly how great the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was before He "went down" to investigate. Why did He conduct this investigation? To demonstrate His justice; to reveal to Abraham that He would not take action that violated His character. It was important to God that the man He had chosen to "bless all the peoples on earth" have a correct concept of God as both loving and just. We, also, need to understand this aspect of God's character in order to accept some of the "harsh realities" of life in a fallen world.

In Sodom, Lot has earned enough esteem to become part of Sodom's leadership. Like his uncle Abraham, Lot offers hospitality to two approaching visitors. Lot lives in a community where sleeping in the public square will place a person at risk, so Lot insists that the visitors sleep at his house. All the males of Sodom surround Lot's house and demand the visitors: "Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." Lot attempts to protect them by offering his two virgin daughters. The town's true estimate of Lot soon emerges: "This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge!" The Sodomites prepare to break down the door, but God's messengers protect Lot. The angels impose a divine judgment on the Sodomites, striking them with blindness.

The angels inform Lot that they are about to destroy the city because of its wickedness. They urge him to evacuate his family and friends. Lot attempts to warn his sons-in-law, who are betrothed to his daughters. They think he is joking, and in the end only Lot's wife and daughters leave with him, but only because the angels physically force them out of the city.

The angels direct Lot's family toward the eastern mountains. Lot is reluctant to leave the valley, so, in spite of angelic help at his side, he says he cannot reach the hill country and asks instead that the tiny town of Zoar be spared. The angels, acting under divine direction, grant his request and God's judgment is held back to accommodate his travel plans. Lot is being irrational; the city has been a barrier to his spiritual growth, yet he can barely drag himself away from it.

When Lot reaches Zoar, God unleashes supernatural destruction upon the other cities. The attraction of Sodom — or perhaps a strange curiosity — is too much for Lot's wife. She looks back in spite of warnings not to do so and perishes as a result. The description that "she became a pillar of salt" does not necessarily mean she was transformed instantly into salt. God may have changed her in a moment's time, or her body could have been slowly encapsulated by the blowing salt that covers objects in the region even today.

Zoar fails to be the haven Lot and his daughters had hoped for; we are told that "he was afraid to stay" there. They soon move east, to the mountains near the Dead Sea, and live in a cave. There they face an uncertain future. Because the fiances of both daughters died in Sodom, the older daughter proposes to her sister a solution to what appears to be the imminent end of their family line: have Lot impregnate her. Knowing he would never agree to such wickedness while sober, they get him drunk. In that state, Lot is unaware of the plan or its execution. The next night, the younger daughter is impregnated as well. The descendants of these children, the Moabites and Ammonites, will persistently trouble the Israelites for many generations.



Our actions must be consistent with our words of faith. The old adage still stands: Actions speak louder than words. Perhaps Lot's compromising lifestyle invalidated his influence on his sons-in-law so that they were indifferent to his warning.

What Lot begged for, God gave him. He was allowed to stay near the environment that had so negatively affected his spiritual growth. Are you asking the Lord for something that may adversely affect your spiritual growth? If we are really honest, most of the time we don't know what is best for us. We can bring up our requests as we pray — but wouldn't we really be better off if we simply said, "Whatever You think is best, Lord. I submit my will to Yours"?



What is God's view of the cause and acceptability of the homosexual lifestyle?

Leviticus 18:22

Romans 1:18-32