

## **SODOM & GOMORRAH**

### *Genesis 18 and 19*

**The background of our story is in Genesis 18.** Three “men” visit Abraham in Mamre (two are angels and one is the Lord). They renewed God’s promise of a child through Sarah. The Lord tells Abraham that the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah have gone too far and the two angels were leaving to destroy the cities. Abraham began pleading with the Lord to save the cities – would He destroy them if there were 50 righteous people in them? The Lord said no He wouldn’t. Abraham tried again with 45. Same answer. Then 40, then 30, then 20 and finally 10. The Lord told him that if there were 10 righteous He wouldn’t destroy them.

**Genesis 19 is the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.** Let’s read the first 29 verses of Genesis 19.

#### **GEOPHYSICAL FACTS**

The whole Jordan Valley is part of a rift, a major fault in the earth’s surface. An earthquake, coupled with the ignition of sulfurous gases could easily have destroyed the cities of the plain. Falling debris could have encased Lot’s wife. But the mechanics are beside the point – the divine principles of judgment and mercy are evident. Lot was rescued for Abraham’s sake. (*International Bible Commentary, F.F. Bruce*).

The Dead Sea is the lowest spot on the earth’s surface, 1286 feet below sea level. The Jordan River empties into the Dead Sea and there is no outlet. Intense heat evaporates great quantities of water so that the salinity of the sea continues to increase. It is 40 miles long, 10 miles wide, divided into two parts and connected by a narrow strait. The south segment is 10 miles long and is only 10-20 feet deep. The northern part is up to 1400 feet deep in places.

Possibly at Abraham’s time, the southern segment was the fertile plain which attracted Lot (Gen. 13:10-13). Since, it has been submerged by water because of the silting up of the bed of the sea in the northern part.

Archeologists believe the “Vale of Siddim” (Gen. 14:3,8,10) and the five cities (excluding Zoar which is still in existence and still called by the same name) were on this plain and remain under the sea.

It was possibly a volcanic eruption or earthquake with a violent electric storm that God used to destroy the cities. There are strange rock formations and unusual geological structures in the area. The southwest corner of the Dead Sea

is a great mountain of rock salt, 700 feet high and 5 miles long called the "Mount of Sodom". These great formations of rock salt are not comparable to salt deposits found in the Dead Sea itself. Some different mode of origin must account for them. It could be massive precipitation from magmas and waters ascending from depths below the surface of the earth. They are volcanic in nature. (*The Genesis Record, Henry M. Morris, pp. 346-357*)

**Some spiritual truths we can learn from the story of Sodom and Gomorrah:**

**GOD MUST AND WILL JUDGE SIN**

**GOD IS MERCIFUL TO THE RIGHTEOUS**

**GOD DEMANDS OBEDIENCE**

**Lessons we can learn from Lot's wife:**

Lot's wife was apparently attached to her life, home, friends and circumstances in Sodom. She couldn't just turn her back on it without looking back. The consequences for her act of disobedience were severe and permanent. Let us not judge her too harshly. How many of us can relate to her?

As believers, we must flee the world, not looking back with regrets or longings, lest we like Lot's wife, be injured in the overthrow.

When the Lord comes, we are going to leave our TV's, our cars, our homes, our "collections" – our *everything!* Will it break your heart to leave all of this down here? (*J Vernon McGee*)

*"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him..." (I John 2:15)*

*"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God." (Hebrews 12:2)*

*Nancy will develop this further with her study "Remember Lot's Wife"...*

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Children's Illustrated Bible (S. Hastings, E. Thomas); Great People of the Bible and How they Lived (Readers Digest); Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary; Atlas of the Bible (Readers Digest); International Bible Commentary (F.F.Bruce); The Genesis Record (Henry M. Morris); Through the Bible with J.Vernon McGee.