GENESIS: THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS · STUDY NOTES

Study 13: The Judge of all the earth

For personal study or groups

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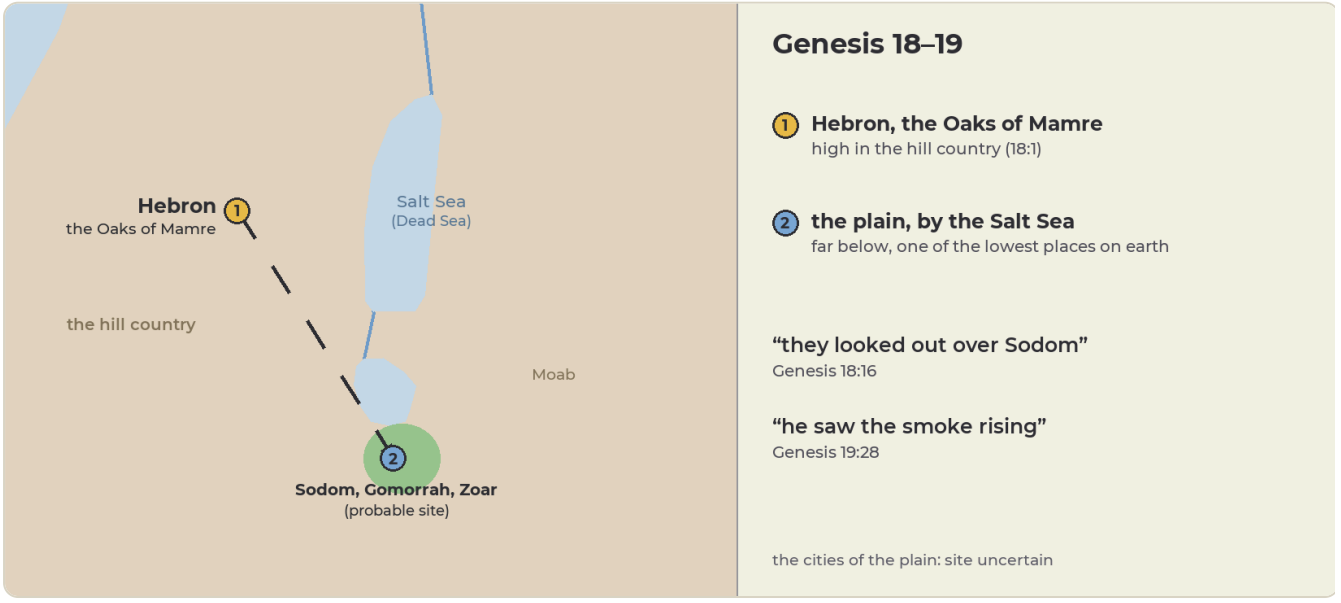
How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

📖 **Before you start: read Genesis 18:16–20:18.** Read it in your own Bible, all the way through, before the videos. Then in this study we go through it together, a few verses at a time. (About 10 minutes.)

PART 1

Abraham pleads for Sodom

Genesis 18:16–33; Hebrews 7:25



From Mamre to the plain: Abraham's tents were near Hebron, high in the hill country. The land falls away steeply to the Dead Sea, and Sodom, Gomorrah and Zoar most probably stood in the plain at its southern end. "They looked out over Sodom" (18:16).

1. "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" As the visitors looked out over Sodom, the LORD asked a question and answered it Himself. God had bound Himself to Abraham by promise, so He treated him not as a servant who is simply told what to do, but as a friend who is told what his master is doing. Abraham "was called a friend of God" (James 2:23), and the Lord Jesus says the same to His disciples: "I have called you friends" (John 15:15). "The LORD confides in those who fear Him" (Psalm 25:14).

1 **Read Genesis 18:16–21**

Why did the LORD not hide His plan from Abraham? What was Abraham to command his children and his household?

2. "For I have chosen him." The choosing came first, and it was God's, not a reward for Abraham's goodness. But God chose him for a purpose: to teach his household "to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just". God's plan to bless the nations would pass through ordinary family life. The faith is meant to be handed on at home, by teaching and by example, by people who walk with God themselves: "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

3. "I will go down to see." The "outcry" against Sodom is the cry of people who have been wronged, calling for justice. God knows all things; He does not need to find out. These words show how He judges: not on rumours, not in a fit of temper, but with the facts fully and fairly established. At Babel too, "the LORD came down to see" before He judged (Genesis 11:5). The Judge of all the earth is patient, careful and just.

4. Abraham stepped forward. The two men went on towards Sodom, but "Abraham remained standing before the LORD". For the first time in the Bible a man begins a conversation with God and pleads with Him for others. Abraham did not say that Sodom was not so bad. His concern was the righteous: would they be swept away with the wicked? And then, more boldly, he asked that the whole city be spared for their sake. He wanted mercy, if mercy could be shown.

2 **Read Genesis 18:22–26**

What did Abraham ask the LORD? What did the LORD reply about fifty righteous people?

5. "Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?" Abraham was not trying to change God's character; he was appealing to it. That is the boldest kind of prayer: prayer that rests on who God is. Two great questions stand side by side in this chapter: "Is anything too difficult for the LORD?" (18:14) and "Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?" (18:25). The answer to both is certain. People in power can lie and courts can make mistakes, but every wrong will

be weighed fairly by Him. And God did not rebuke Abraham for asking; He welcomed the prayer.

6. "Though I am but dust and ashes." Abraham remembered who he was, and yet he spoke: true prayer is deeply humble and yet bold, because God has invited us to come. The numbers came down, from fifty to ten. Abraham was not bargaining. Like a child who jumps into his father's arms from one step, then from a higher one, he was discovering how far he could trust. The number grew smaller, but God's answer never changed, because it rested on His character.

3 **Read Genesis 18:27–33**

How did Abraham describe himself? What was the last number he asked about, and what did the LORD answer?

7. A few righteous people. A whole wicked city would have been spared for the sake of ten. God's people matter in the places where they live: "You are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). If you are the only Christian in your family or your workplace, your faithfulness and your prayers make a difference. Yet no number of righteous people will put off the final day for ever: God "has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed" (Acts 17:31). So we pray, live, and proclaim the gospel, that others may be ready.

8. The One who always intercedes. We offer this gently, as a picture rather than as something the passage says in so many words. Lot did not know his danger and was not praying for himself, but Abraham was praying for him. Every Christian has a far greater Intercessor: Jesus "always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25). "I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith will not fail" (Luke 22:32). And Christ pleads on the ground of His own death: God saves the wicked who trust in Him for the sake of one righteous Man (Romans 8:34).

4 **Read Hebrews 7:25**

Whom is Jesus able to save completely? What does He always live to do?

PART 2

Fire from heaven

Genesis 19:1–29; Luke 17:26–32; 2 Peter 2:6–9



Lot's steps towards Sodom: "Lot looked out and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan… was well watered" (13:10); he "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (13:12); "Lot was living in Sodom" (14:12); "Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city" (19:1). One step at a time.

1. Lot at the gate. Step by step Lot had moved from a tent near Sodom to a house in it, and now to a seat in the gateway, where the leading men of the city met. No one step looked like a great fall, but together they took him a long way. He still welcomed strangers as his uncle had, and he insisted that the visitors should not spend the night in the square, because he knew what his city was like at night.

5 **Read Genesis 19:1–3**

Where was Lot sitting when the angels arrived? What did he offer them?

2. Righteous, and tormented. Peter tells us what Genesis does not: Lot was "a righteous man distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless" (2 Peter 2:7). What he saw and heard grieved him, and yet he stayed. Many believers live like that: troubled by the world, but too settled in it to come out.

6 **Read 2 Peter 2:7–8**

How did Lot feel about what he saw and heard in Sodom?

3. The sin of Sodom. "All the men of the city of Sodom, both young and old" came to the door: not even ten righteous were found among them. They demanded the visitors, to force themselves on them: violence, cruelty to strangers and sexual sin, done openly and without shame. The rest of the Bible tells us more. Sodom was "arrogant, overfed, and complacent; they did not help the poor and needy" (Ezekiel 16:49), and the cities "indulged in sexual immorality and pursued strange flesh" (Jude 7). Both are true, and neither should be shrunk; and "like Sodom they flaunt their sin" (Isaiah 3:9). We say it kindly, because we are all sinners ourselves, but no less clearly than God's Word does. The good news is not that God calls sin something else, but that Jesus Christ came to save sinners of every kind and to make them new.

7 **Read Genesis 19:4–11**

Who surrounded Lot's house? What did the visitors do to the men at the door?

4. Lot's terrible offer. Lot called the crowd's demand "wicked", and then offered them his own daughters. The Bible tells us what he did; it does not approve it. God never asks us to do one evil in order to prevent another. Living so long in Sodom had dulled even a righteous man's sense of what is right. And the crowd still saw him as an outsider: "This one came here as a foreigner, and he is already acting like a judge!"

5. "Because of the LORD's compassion for them." "Do you have anyone else here?" Before judgement fell, mercy reached out to Lot's whole family; it is a question for every Christian about the people we love. The sons-in-law "thought he was joking", as many still laugh at the warning of God's judgement. Then, with the city about to burn, "Lot hesitated". So the angels took him, his wife and his daughters by the hand and led them out. Lot was not saved because he was quick to obey, nor because he deserved it, but "because of the LORD's compassion". That is the only reason anyone is ever rescued.

8 **Read Genesis 19:12–16**

What did Lot's sons-in-law think when he warned them? Why did the angels lead Lot and his family out of the city?

6. "Run for your lives!" There was no safe place anywhere on the plain, and no safety in staying where they were. Charles Spurgeon preached on these words as a call to flee to Christ: there is no safety in unforgiven sin, nor in our own good deeds. Lot argued, and asked for a small town, and even that weak request was granted: the town was called Zoar, "small". Then the wonderful sentence: "I cannot do anything until you reach it." The judgement waited until God's people were safe, as God's patience with the world today waits for His people still to be gathered in: "not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

9 **Read Genesis 19:17–22**

What did the angel tell Lot to do? Why could he do nothing until Lot reached Zoar?

7. Sulfur and fire, and a pillar of salt. The sun rose on an ordinary morning, and "the LORD rained down sulfur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens." Twice in one verse: the LORD. Whatever means He used, this was the Judge of all the earth doing what is right. The well-watered plain Lot had chosen was gone in a morning. "But Lot's wife looked back." It was not a glance of curiosity. She had been led out by the hand, but her heart was still in the city. She was out of Sodom, but Sodom was not out of her; she was almost safe, and she perished.

10 **Read Genesis 19:23–26**

What did the LORD rain down on Sodom and Gomorrah? What happened to Lot's wife?

8. "He remembered Abraham." Early the next morning Abraham went back to the place where he had prayed, and saw only smoke "like smoke from a furnace". He did not know what had happened in the night. But God had heard: not ten righteous were found, so the city fell, but the righteous man was not swept away with the wicked. The prayer was answered, not as Abraham had asked, but in a way that kept God's justice and showed His mercy. "The prayer of a righteous man has great power to prevail" (James 5:16). Keep praying, even when you see only smoke.

11 **Read Genesis 19:27–29**

Where did Abraham go early in the morning, and what did he see? Why did God bring Lot out?

9. "Remember Lot's wife!" Jesus says that the day He returns will be like the day Sodom fell: an ordinary day of "eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building", and then sudden judgement. "Remember Lot's wife!": do not be almost saved. Peter draws a double lesson: Sodom is "an example of what is coming on the ungodly", and "the Lord knows how to rescue the godly". He calls Lot righteous three times; Lot was far from perfect, but he was righteous as Abraham was, by faith (Genesis 15:6). A day of judgement is coming, and the way of escape is Jesus Christ, who took God's judgement on Himself for all who trust in Him. If you have not yet fled to Him, do not linger; and if you have, do not look back.

12 **Read Luke 17:26–32**

What were people doing in the days of Lot? What does Jesus tell us to remember?

13 **Read 2 Peter 2:6–9**

What did God do to Sodom and Gomorrah, and what did He do for Lot? What does the Lord know how to do?

PART 3

Lot's end, and an old failure

Genesis 19:30–20:18; Ruth 1:16

1. Out of Sodom, but... Lot had been afraid of the mountains; now he was afraid of Zoar, and went to live in a cave. The man who had chosen the best land had lost everything. His daughters reasoned as the world reasons, by what they could see, without asking God, and twice made their father drunk and lay with him. The Bible tells it without comment, and we need not say more. They had been brought up in Sodom and had learned its ways: out of Sodom, but Sodom was not out of them. As Lot had once offered his daughters to protect his guests, so now his daughters used him to secure their family's future. From the two sons came Moab and Ammon, who troubled Israel for centuries.

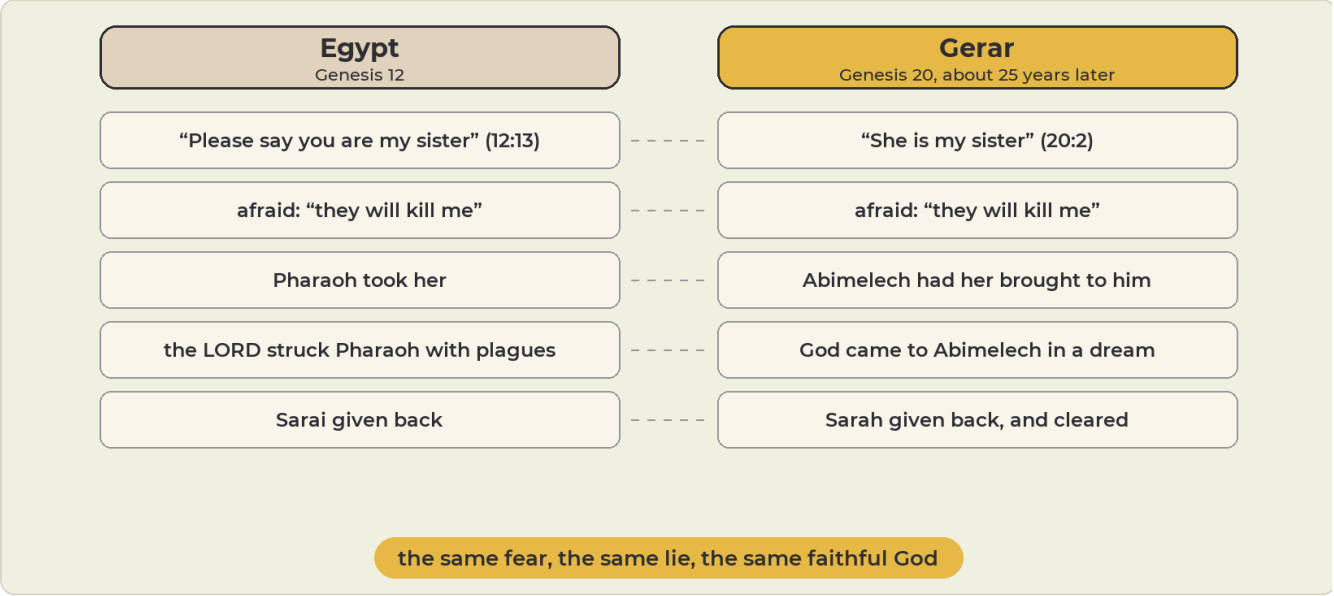
14 **Read Genesis 19:30 and 19:36–38**

Why did Lot leave Zoar, and where did he go to live? Which two peoples came from Lot's grandsons?

2. Grace for a Moabite. Centuries later a young widow from Moab, Ruth, said to Naomi: "Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." She became the great-grandmother of King David, and Matthew names her in the family line of Jesus: "Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth" (Matthew 1:5). No one's past is too dark for the grace of God. And there is a warning in Lot's end: rescued and called righteous, he still finished his life in shame. "So the one who thinks he is standing firm should be careful not to fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

15 **Read Ruth 1:16**

What did Ruth say to Naomi?



The same fear, twice: in Egypt, "Please say you are my sister" (12:13), Pharaoh took her, and the LORD struck Pharaoh with plagues. In Gerar, about twenty-five years later, "She is my sister" (20:2), Abimelech had Sarah brought to him, and "God came to Abimelech in a dream". The same fear, the same lie, the same faithful God.

3. The same fear, twice. We have read this before, in Egypt (Genesis 12). Some twenty-five years later, after victories, a covenant, a new name, and the promise of a son "at this time next year", Abraham's old fear came back in a new place, and with it the old lie. And this time the danger was greater: Sarah was about to conceive the promised son. If she had stayed in Abimelech's house, who could have said whose child he was?

4. "I have kept you from sinning against Me." God stepped in, not by coming to Abraham, but by coming to the pagan king in a dream. He had been at work all along, quietly holding Abimelech back before anyone knew the danger. God restrains evil in the world far more than we see, and He guards His promises even when His own people put them at risk. And He still called Abraham "a prophet" whose prayer would save Abimelech's life. His grace was greater than Abraham's failure.

16 **Read Genesis 20:1–7**

What did Abraham say about Sarah at Gerar? What did God tell Abimelech in the dream?

5. Abraham's excuses. The pagan king rebuked the prophet: "You have done things to me that should not be done." Abraham gave three answers. "Surely there is no fear of God in this place": but there was. "She really is my sister": a half-truth told to deceive is still a lie. "When God had me journey...": almost blaming the life God had called him to. And then the saddest words:

"Wherever we go." It had not been one weak moment, but a settled plan. "The fear of man is a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is set securely on high" (Proverbs 29:25).

17 **Read Genesis 20:8–13**

What did Abimelech ask Abraham? What reasons did Abraham give?

18 **Read Proverbs 29:25**

What is the fear of man? What happens to the one who trusts in the LORD?

6. Our besetting sins. Most of us have sins that come back again and again in the same kind of situation: anger when we feel wronged, a lie when we feel cornered, a bitter word, or something we go back to when we are lonely. Abraham's story helps us to fight them. Recognise the pattern, and learn the situations where you are weakest. Remember where it led last time. See that there is another way: "God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide an escape" (1 Corinthians 10:13). And when you fail, do not give up: confess the sin, and come back to the God who forgives and keeps you.

19 **Read 1 Corinthians 10:13**

What does God not let happen to us? What does He provide when we are tempted?

7. The faithfulness of God. Abimelech gave Abraham flocks, servants and a thousand pieces of silver, a public sign that Sarah was innocent: "you are completely cleared". No one could ever say her child was anyone's but Abraham's. Then "Abraham prayed to God, and God healed" Abimelech's household. For years Abraham had prayed for a child; now God opened the wombs in a pagan king's household in answer to his prayer, and in the very next chapter "the LORD did for Sarah what He had promised" (21:1). God kept His promise not because of Abraham, but in spite of him.

20 **Read Genesis 20:14–18**

What did Abimelech give Abraham? What happened when Abraham prayed?

8. Kept by grace. Over and over in this study people fail, and over and over the Judge of all the earth does what is right and keeps His word. We are not saved because we are strong, and we will not be kept to the end because we are strong: "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6). But grace does not make sin a small thing: "How can we who died to sin live in it any longer?" (Romans 6:2). So let us trust God where Abraham was afraid, flee from sin where Lot lingered, and look forward, never back, to the city God is building.

21 **Read Philippians 1:6**

Who began the good work in you? How long will He carry it on?

Study 13 in summary

The LORD took His friend Abraham into His confidence about Sodom, and Abraham stood before Him and pleaded for the city, resting his prayer on God's own character: "Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?" For the sake of ten righteous people the city would have been spared, but not even ten were found. The angels led Lot out by the hand, "because of the LORD's compassion", and the LORD rained down sulfur and fire; Lot's wife looked back, and Jesus tells us to remember her. God remembered Abraham and brought Lot out, but Lot ended his life in shame. Then Abraham himself fell into his old sin at Gerar, and God stepped in to guard His promise. Over and over people fail, and over and over the Judge of all the earth does what is right and keeps His word.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What do you learn about prayer from the way Abraham pleaded for Sodom (Genesis 18:23–32)?

2. Why were Lot and his family brought out of Sodom (Genesis 19:16, 29)?

3. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Remember Lot's wife!" (Luke 17:32)?

4. Is there a sin that comes back to you in the same kind of situation, as Abraham's did? What does 1 Corinthians 10:13 tell you about it?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 13

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

GENESIS · STUDY 13 · MEMORY VERSE

“Far be it from You to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?”

Genesis 18:25

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“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Genesis 18:16–21** *16When the men got up to leave, they looked out over Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them off. 17And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? 18Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed. 19For I have chosen him, so that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, in order that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has promised." 20Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great. Because their sin is so grievous, 21I will go down to see if their actions fully justify the outcry that has reached Me. If not, I will find out."*

2 **Genesis 18:22–26** *22And the two men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. 23Abraham stepped forward and said, "Will You really sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24What if there are fifty righteous ones in the city? Will You really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous ones who are there? 25Far be it from You to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?" 26So the LORD replied, "If I find fifty righteous ones within the city of Sodom, on their account I will spare the whole place."*

3 **Genesis 18:27–33** *27Then Abraham answered, "Now that I have ventured to speak to the Lord—though I am but dust and ashes— 28suppose the fifty righteous ones lack five. Will You destroy the whole city for the lack of five?" He replied, "If I find forty-five there, I will not destroy it." 29Once again Abraham spoke to the LORD, "Suppose forty are found there?" He answered, "On account of the forty, I will not do it." 30Then Abraham said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak further. Suppose thirty are found there?" He replied, "If I find thirty there, I will not do it." 31And Abraham said, "Now that I have ventured to speak to the Lord, suppose twenty are found there?" He answered, "On account of the twenty, I will not destroy it." 32Finally, Abraham said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak once more. Suppose ten are found there?" And He answered, "On account of the ten, I will not destroy it." 33When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, He departed, and Abraham returned home.*

4 **Hebrews 7:25** *Therefore He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.*

5 **Genesis 19:1–3** *1Now the two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them, bowed facedown, 2and said, "My lords, please turn aside into the house of your servant; wash your feet and spend the night. Then you can rise early and go on your way." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." 3But Lot insisted so strongly that they followed him into his house. He prepared a feast for them and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.*

6 **2 Peter 2:7–8** *7and if He rescued Lot, a righteous man distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless 8(for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—*

7 **Genesis 19:4–11** *4Before they had gone to bed, all the men of the city of Sodom, both young and old, surrounded the house. 5They called out to Lot, saying, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to us so we can have relations with them!" 6Lot went outside to meet them, shutting the door behind him. 7"Please, my brothers," he pleaded, "don't do such a wicked thing! 8Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them to you, and you can do to them as you please. But do not do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof." 9"Get out of the way!" they replied. And they declared, "This one came here as a foreigner, and he is already acting like a judge! Now we will treat you worse than them." And they pressed in on Lot and moved in to break down the door. 10But the men inside reached out, pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. 11And they struck the men at the entrance, young and old, with blindness, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the door.*

8 **Genesis 19:12–16** *12Then the two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here—a son-in-law, your sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, 13because we are about to destroy this place. For the outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that He has sent us to destroy it." 14So Lot went out and spoke to the sons-in-law who were pledged in marriage to his daughters. "Get up," he said. "Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking. 15At daybreak the angels hurried Lot along, saying, "Get up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city." 16But when Lot hesitated, the men grabbed his hand and the hands of his wife and his two daughters. And they led them safely out of the city, because of the LORD's compassion for them.*

9 **Genesis 19:17–22** *17As soon as the men had brought them out, one of them said, "Run for your lives! Do not look back, and do not stop anywhere on the plain! Flee to the mountains, or you will be swept away!" 18But Lot replied, "No, my lords, please! 19Your servant has indeed found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness by sparing my life. But I cannot run to the mountains; the disaster will overtake me, and I will die. 20Look, there is a town nearby where I can flee, and it is a small place. Please let me flee there—is it not a small place? Then my life will be saved." 21"Very well," he answered, "I will grant this request as well, and will not demolish the town you indicate. 22Hurry! Run there quickly, for I cannot do anything until you reach it." That is why the town was called Zoar.*

10 **Genesis 19:23–26** *23And by the time the sun had risen over the land, Lot had reached Zoar. 24Then the LORD rained down sulfur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens. 25Thus He destroyed these cities and the entire plain, including all the inhabitants of the cities and everything that grew on the ground. 26But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.*

11 **Genesis 19:27–29** *27 Early the next morning, Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the LORD. 28 He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the plain, and he saw the smoke rising from the land like smoke from a furnace. 29 So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, He remembered Abraham, and He brought Lot out of the catastrophe that destroyed the cities where he had lived.*

12 **Luke 17:26–32** *26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man: 27 People were eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 It was the same in the days of Lot: People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 It will be just like that on the day the Son of Man is revealed. 31 On that day, let no one on the housetop come down to retrieve his possessions. Likewise, let no one in the field return for anything he has left behind. 32 Remember Lot's wife!*

13 **2 Peter 2:6–9** *6 if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, reducing them to ashes as an example of what is coming on the ungodly; 7 and if He rescued Lot, a righteous man distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— 9 if all this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.*

14 **Genesis 19:30–38** *30 Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and settled in the mountains—for he was afraid to stay in Zoar—where they lived in a cave. 31 One day the older daughter said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man in the land to sleep with us, as is the custom over all the earth. 32 Come, let us get our father drunk with wine so we can sleep with him and preserve his line." 33 So that night they got their father drunk with wine, and the firstborn went in and slept with her father; he was not aware when she lay down or when she got up. 34 The next day the older daughter said to the younger, "Look, I slept with my father last night. Let us get him drunk with wine again tonight so you can go in and sleep with him and we can preserve our father's line." 35 So again that night they got their father drunk with wine, and the younger daughter went in and slept with him; he was not aware when she lay down or when she got up. 36 Thus both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. 37 The older daughter gave birth to a son and named him Moab. He is the father of the Moabites of today. 38 The younger daughter also gave birth to a son, and she named him Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites of today.*

15 **Ruth 1:16** *But Ruth replied: "Do not urge me to leave you or to turn from following you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.*

16 **Genesis 20:1–7** *1Now Abraham journeyed from there to the region of the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was staying in Gerar, 2Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." So Abimelech king of Gerar had Sarah brought to him. 3One night, however, God came to Abimelech in a dream and told him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken, for she is a married woman." 4Now Abimelech had not gone near her, so he replied, "Lord, would You destroy a nation even though it is innocent? 5Didn't Abraham tell me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' I have done this in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands." 6Then God said to Abimelech in the dream, "Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against Me. That is why I did not let you touch her. 7Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet; he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, be aware that you will surely die—you and all who belong to you."*

17 **Genesis 20:8–13** *8Early the next morning Abimelech got up and summoned all his servants; and when he described to them all that had happened, the men were terrified. 9Then Abimelech called Abraham and asked, "What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you, that you have brought such tremendous guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should not be done." 10Abimelech also asked Abraham, "What prompted you to do such a thing?" 11Abraham replied, "I thought to myself, 'Surely there is no fear of God in this place. They will kill me on account of my wife.' 12Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father—though not the daughter of my mother—and she became my wife. 13So when God had me journey from my father's house, I said to Sarah, 'This is how you can show your loyalty to me: Wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother."'"*

18 **Proverbs 29:25** *The fear of man is a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is set securely on high.*

19 **1 Corinthians 10:13** *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide an escape, so that you can stand up under it.*

20 **Genesis 20:14–18** *14So Abimelech brought sheep and cattle, menservants and maidservants, and he gave them to Abraham and restored his wife Sarah to him. 15And Abimelech said, "Look, my land is before you. Settle wherever you please." 16And he said to Sarah, "See, I am giving your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is your vindication before all who are with you; you are completely cleared." 17Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maidservants, so that they could again bear children— 18for on account of Abraham's wife Sarah, the LORD had completely closed all the wombs in Abimelech's household.*

21 **Philippians 1:6** *being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 13: The Judge of all the earth

> **Memory verse:** “Far be it from You to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?” (Genesis 18:25). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- See the LORD take Abraham, His friend, into His confidence (18:17–19), and Abraham plead for Sodom on the ground of God's own character: "Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?" (18:25).
- Learn from Abraham's prayer that true prayer is humble and bold together, and that a few righteous people matter to the place where they live; and see in Christ the greater Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25).
- See the sin of Sodom as the whole Bible describes it (Genesis 19; Ezekiel 16:49; Jude 7), Lot rescued "because of the LORD's compassion" (19:16), and the warning of Lot's wife as Jesus applies it: "Remember Lot's wife!" (Luke 17:32).
- See Lot's sad end and Abraham's old failure at Gerar, and God's faithfulness in both: grace for a Moabite (Ruth), and a promise kept in spite of Abraham.

Suggested timing (about 2 hours, or three meetings)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer. Ask the group to read Genesis 18:16–20:18 before the meeting.
- **30 min** Part 1 video (15 min); Genesis 18:16–33, with Hebrews 7:25.
- **35 min** Part 2 video (20 min); Genesis 19:1–29, with Luke 17:26–32 and 2 Peter 2:6–9.
- **30 min** Part 3 video (15 min); Genesis 19:30–20:18, with Ruth 1:16 and 1 Corinthians 10:13.
- **15 min** Reflection questions. Close in prayer, thanking God that the Judge of all the earth does what is right, and that He keeps His people by His grace.

For most groups, take one part each week. If you do, read the passage for that part aloud together before the video.

Tips

- **Abraham's numbers** (18:24–32): Abraham was not bargaining with God, but discovering how far he could trust Him. Why he stopped at ten, the Bible does not say; do not let the group spend long guessing.
- **Christ the Intercessor** (Part 1): the study offers it gently, as a picture, not as something the passage says in so many words. Keep it that way.
- **The sin of Sodom** (19:4–11): the study names it plainly, with the Bible's own words, and nothing graphic. Keep the discussion short and discreet, especially with young people present. Hold both parts of the Bible's description together, pride and no care for the poor (Ezekiel 16:49) and sexual sin (Jude 7), without shrinking either. Speak kindly: some in the group may love people who struggle in these ways, or struggle themselves. The good news is that Christ came to save sinners of every kind.
- **Lot's offer of his daughters** (19:8): the Bible records it; it does not approve it. If the question comes up, the answer is simple: God never asks us to do one evil in order to prevent another.
- **Lot's daughters** (19:30–38) are covered in a few plain sentences in the study. Do not dwell on the details; the point is that they had learned Sodom's ways, and that God's grace later reached even a Moabite, Ruth.
- **"Righteous Lot"** (2 Peter 2:7–8): some will find it hard that Lot is called righteous. He was righteous as Abraham was, by faith (Genesis 15:6), not by his conduct. This is a good place to make the gospel plain.

- **Lot's wife and the fire** (19:24–26): keep the group on what the Bible makes clear: the LORD did it, and Lot's wife looked back because her heart was still in the city. Questions about natural causes, or the place of the cities, can be left aside.
- **Besetting sins** (Part 3): invite members to think about their own, but do not ask anyone to name theirs in the group. Point them to 1 Corinthians 10:13 and to God's forgiveness.
- **Ask in the closing prayer** for anyone the group knows who is still far from God: "Do you have anyone else here?" (19:12).