

# A Rood Awakening!

Presents

# *Awakening in the Word*

By Glenn McWilliams of TK TORAH KEEPERS  
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## THE OVERVIEW

Our portion this week contains the conclusion to the previous narrative of Abraham's visitation with YHWH. In last week's portion three visitors came to visit Abraham and revealed their very serious mission concerning Sodom and Gomorrah. The portion concluded with two of the visitors heading to Sodom while Abraham interceded with YHWH for the righteous ones that might yet be living in the cities being judged. Our narrative contains details of the visitors' inquiry, Lot's hospitality, the judgment of the cities in question, the escape of Lot, and the peculiar conclusion to the story of Lot.

## THE OUTLINE

The outline for this portion is really quite simple:

- Genesis 19:1           The visitors arrive in Sodom
- Genesis 19:2-3        Lot's hospitality
- Genesis 19:4-9        The testimony of the wickedness of Sodom
- Genesis 19:10-11     The first rescue of Lot
- Genesis 19:12-17     The second rescue of Lot
- Genesis 19:18-23     Lot intercedes for himself
- Genesis 19:24-25     The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
- Genesis 19:26         Lot's wife looks back
- Genesis 19:27-29     Abraham receives his answer
- Genesis 19:30-38     Lot's daughters' incestuous relationship with their father

## SUGGESTED STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is Lot sitting in the gate of the city?
2. How is Lot's hospitality different from Abraham's?
3. What is significant about the use of the word "Lord" or "Adonai"?
4. What is the sin of Sodom?
5. Is Lot a righteous man?
6. How many daughters does Lot have?
7. How does Lot leave Sodom?
8. How is Lot's intercession different from Abraham's?
9. Who destroys Sodom?
10. What is significant about the use of the name YHWH in this story?
11. Why does Lot want to go to Zoar?
12. Why does his wife look back?
13. Why does Lot leave Zoar?
14. What do Lot's daughters fear?

**THE TEXT**

**Genesis 19:1-38** *And there came two malachim to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; <sup>2</sup>and he said, Behold now, my Adonai, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. <sup>3</sup>And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. <sup>4</sup>But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: <sup>5</sup>and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them. <sup>6</sup>And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, <sup>7</sup>and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. <sup>8</sup>Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. <sup>9</sup>And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. <sup>10</sup>But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. <sup>11</sup>And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. <sup>12</sup>And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? Son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: <sup>13</sup>for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of YHWH; and YHWH hath sent us to destroy it. <sup>14</sup>And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for YHWH will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.*

<sup>15</sup>And when the morning arose, then the malachim hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

<sup>16</sup>And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; YHWH being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

<sup>17</sup>And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

<sup>18</sup>And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Adonai: <sup>19</sup>behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: <sup>20</sup>behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

<sup>21</sup>And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

<sup>22</sup>Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

<sup>23</sup>The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

<sup>24</sup>Then YHWH rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from YHWH out of heaven; <sup>25</sup>and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

<sup>26</sup>But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

<sup>27</sup>And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before YHWH: <sup>28</sup>and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

<sup>29</sup>And it came to pass, when Elohim destroyed the cities of the plain, that Elohim remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

<sup>30</sup>And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

<sup>31</sup>And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: <sup>32</sup>come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

<sup>33</sup>And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. <sup>34</sup>And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. <sup>35</sup>And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. <sup>36</sup>Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. <sup>37</sup>And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. <sup>38</sup>And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

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While it may appear that the narrative of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the rescue of Lot is a completely independent narrative or tradition, this is not the case. Let us begin this study by looking at the overall context of this story as it relates to the larger Abrahamic narrative.

Abraham receives the revelation of the Sovereign's intention toward Sodom and Gomorrah during a visitation which contains the revelation of Sarah's pregnancy and the timing of Isaac's birth.

**Genesis 18:1-2** *And YHWH appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; <sup>2</sup>and he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.*

**Genesis 18:10** *And He said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.*

**Genesis 18:14** *Is any thing too hard for YHWH? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.*

At the conclusion of this visitation Abraham accompanies his visitors on part of their journey. It is at this time that the Sovereign One chooses to reveal His intentions to Abraham.

**Genesis 18:17-21** *And YHWH said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; <sup>18</sup>seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? <sup>19</sup>For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of YHWH, to do justice and judgment; that YHWH may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him. <sup>20</sup>And YHWH said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; <sup>21</sup>I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know.*

Disturbed by this information, Abraham boldly draws near to the Sovereign One and begins to intercede for the sake of the righteous ones who may yet be living in the cities under investigation.

**Genesis 18:25** *That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

In a selfless display of intercession Abraham humbly negotiates with YHWH, the merciful deliverer, for the lives of the righteous. This narrative of Abraham's visitation ends inconclusively with the departure of YHWH from Abraham's presence.

**Genesis 18:33** *And YHWH went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.*

The conclusion of this Abrahamic narrative picks up again toward the end of our present Torah portion.

**Genesis 19:27-29** *And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before YHWH:<sup>28</sup> and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.<sup>29</sup> And it came to pass, when Elohim destroyed the cities of the plain, that Elohim remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.*

Clearly Genesis 19:1-26 is an insertion into the Abrahamic narrative. If we were to remove these verses, we would see that Genesis 18:16-33 and Genesis 19:27-29 make up one complete narrative. For the sake of space, I will only present here the last few verses of chapter 18.

**Genesis 18:32-33; 19:27-29** *And he said, Oh let not YHWH be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.<sup>33</sup> And YHWH went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.<sup>19:27</sup> And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before YHWH:<sup>28</sup> and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.<sup>29</sup> And it came to pass, when Elohim destroyed the cities of the plain, that Elohim remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.*

In this abbreviated version of the narrative we witness the clear answer to Abraham's intercession. Obviously there are not ten righteous men found living in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The very visible smoke from the cities declares that after diligent investigation, the accusations and cries against the wickedness of Sodom are verified. These billows of smoke stand as bailiffs, declaring that the sentence has been given and the judgment executed.

We must now ask whether this means to imply that Abraham's prayers were of no avail. The answer to this question must be a resounding no! By closing the gap between the beginning and ending of this story, we see very emphatically that Lot is saved by the merit of Abraham. It is very clear from this text that the rescue of Lot is understood to be in direct connection with Elohim remembering Abraham.

**Genesis 19:29** *And it came to pass, when Elohim destroyed the cities of the plain, that Elohim remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.*

We may also conclude that although Abraham's negotiations stopped at ten righteous men, the Sovereign One was, in fact, demonstrating the righteous justice invoked by Abraham at the beginning of his prayer.

**Genesis 18:23** *And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?*

**Genesis 18:25** *That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

While the unrighteous cities could not be spared from the righteous justice of the Sovereign One, the righteous were not killed with the wicked.

We may conclude, therefore, that Abraham's intercession was not without power and impact. We may recall the exhortation of the apostle James:

**James 5:16** *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

There are two other questions we may raise at this point. The first concerns the insertion of the narrative of the visitation of Sodom. If these verses are indeed the conclusion of the narrative of Abraham's visitation, then we must ask why the visitation of Sodom was inserted into the text. The second question that is raised by these verses concerns the character of Lot. If YHWH positively answered Abraham's intercessory prayer for the righteous and Lot was spared, does this imply that Lot was considered to be a righteous man, or was he saved purely for Abraham's sake?

In many ways the answer to the first question is directly connected to the second question. What we witness in the insertion of the second narrative, the visitation of Sodom, are the details of the events taking place outside the view of Abraham. While Abraham is still on the edge of Mamre interceding with YHWH, two of his visitors, identified by the text as *malachim*, go on to Sodom.

**Genesis 18:16** *And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.*

**Genesis 18:22** *And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before YHWH.*

Although these stories may be separated into two separate visitations, it is very clear that they are intrinsically connected to one another. Once again, let me remind you that these stories are being related to Moses on Mount Sinai by the Creator Himself. Therefore, what we are receiving is Elohim's eye-view of these events. All of these events were already completed at the time of their telling. The Creator tells us the general events and then relates the specific details of what was experienced in Sodom at the time of the visitation. In the relaying of this story to Moses and the children of Israel, the Creator is giving us the whole story. If this story had been told by Abraham and then passed down from generation to generation, we would have received only the shortened version. By inserting the story of the visitation of Sodom into the previous story of the visitation of Abraham, the two main characters, Abraham and Lot, are placed side-by-side in a manner that begs for comparison. We should quickly recognize the numerous parallels between Abraham and Lot.

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| • Both come out of Ur of Chaldea          | Genesis 11:31          |
| • Both suffer the loss of their fathers   | Genesis 11:28, 32      |
| • Both are commanded to leave their homes | Genesis 12:1; 19:12    |
| • Both move to Canaan                     | Genesis 12:4-5         |
| • Both go down to Egypt                   | Genesis 12:10          |
| • Both return with wealth from Egypt      | Genesis 13:1-2, 5      |
| • Both receive a visitation               | Genesis 18:1ff; 19:1ff |

While there is much in common between these two men, there are also clear contrasts. Let us focus first upon their diverse expressions of hospitality as shown to the sudden visitors. But before we look at this contrast, let us again compare the similarities in their situations. Both Abraham and Lot are presented with the sudden appearance and visit of strangers. Both Abraham and Lot greet the strangers with an expression of reverence, bowing themselves toward the ground. Both men invite the strangers to abide with them. Both men persuade the strangers to become their guests. Both men encourage the washing of their guests' feet. Both men have a meal prepared for their guests. We may assume from the similarity of actions that Lot learned much from his Uncle Abraham's previous examples of hospitality. Now let us look at the contrast between these two men. While both men clearly exercise the same expressions of hospitality, the quality and intent of their gestures vary greatly one from the other. For the sake of convenience I have put the stories of hospitality side by side for easier comparison.

**Genesis 18:1-8** And YHWH appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the **tent** door in the heat of the day; <sup>2</sup>and he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he **ran** to meet them from the **tent** door, and bowed himself toward the ground, <sup>3</sup>and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant: <sup>4</sup>**let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:** <sup>5</sup>and I will fetch a **morsel of bread**, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. <sup>6</sup>And Abraham **hastened** into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready **quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.** <sup>7</sup>And Abraham **ran** unto the herd, and fetcht a **calf tender and good**, and gave it unto a young man; and he **hasted** to dress it. <sup>8</sup>And he took **butter, and milk**, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did

Both Abraham and Lot entertain strangers.

Abraham lives in a **tent**, while Lot lives in a **house** and sits in the city gate.

Abraham **runs** to greet his guests in the heat of the day. Lot **rises** to meet his guests in the cool of the night.

Abraham "**hurries**" to serve his guests and begs them to stay, rest, and be comforted. Lot serves his guests, but encourages them to **hurry** in and to **leave early**.

Abraham offers to **fetch water** for his guests so they might wash their feet. Lot merely encourages his guests to **wash their feet**.

Abraham offers his guests a mere **morsel of bread** but then serves them a **feast**. Lot, however, offers his guests a **feast** and serves them **unleavened bread**.

**Genesis 19:1-3** And there came two angels to Sodom: and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them **rose** up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; <sup>2</sup>and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's **house**, and tarry all night, and **wash your feet**, and ye shall **rise up early, and go on your ways**. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. <sup>3</sup>And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his **house**; and he made them a **feast**, and did bake **unleavened bread**, and they did eat.

While both men do indeed extend hospitality to their guests, there is a clear difference. Visiting with Abraham may be likened to staying at the King David Hotel, a five star hotel in Jerusalem; while visiting with Lot may be likened to staying in a Motel 6 in some sleazy part of town. Both the King David and the Motel 6 may be good hotels, but the difference between them is obvious. We should note how Abraham seems to diminish everything he does. Abraham does not sit in the city gate like some dignitary or civic leader; he sits in the humble confines of his own tent. Abraham fetches a "little" water and a "morsel" of bread. Abraham offers little but does much. Abraham demonstrates for us a number of the attributes of a *tzadik* or "righteous man." Abraham does not build himself up, but seeks to make his guests feel special. Abraham demonstrates humility and servitude in all that he does. As we have seen, Lot mimics many of the same expressions of hospitality, but the heart behind these actions seems somewhat flawed or

diminished. Let us look further into the details of the story of Lot's rescue for a better understanding of the character of Lot.

We may recall that Abram was called to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house.

**Genesis 12:1** *Now YHWH had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.*

But Abram took Lot with him on the journey. This act of incomplete obedience eventually led to strife between the shepherds and herdsmen of Abram and those of Lot. Abram asked Lot to separate from him, and graciously gave Lot the first choice of land.

**Genesis 13:7-9** *And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. <sup>8</sup>And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. <sup>9</sup>Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

Without prayer or consideration for Abram, Lot saw that the best land was in the Jordan valley and chose to live there.

**Genesis 13:10** *And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before YHWH destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of YHWH, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.*

The Torah also tells us that while this land was indeed very prosperous, it was also filled with very wicked men.

**Genesis 13:13** *But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before YHWH exceedingly.*

This did not prevent Lot from living there. The Torah tells us that at first Lot merely pitched his tent toward Sodom.

**Genesis 13:12** *Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.*

In our current portion, however, we see that Lot has now built a house in the city and even sits in the gates as a somewhat prominent figure.

**Genesis 19:1-2** *And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; <sup>2</sup>and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.*

Here I am reminded of the teaching of Psalm 1.

**Psalm 1:1** *Blessed is the man that **walketh** not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor **standeth** in the way of sinners, nor **sitteth** in the seat of the scornful.*

I have highlighted the verbs to draw attention to their progressive nature. The psalmist warns us not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly. We are all surrounded by ungodly people in our lives. Many of these people are more than happy to give us ungodly suggestions, counsel, and advice. As believers, we should never heed such advice. When we find ourselves walking in such circumstances, we should

repent and quickly remove ourselves from the situation. We should certainly not stand there or dwell there.

Let me give a simple example. Television has become a medium of great perversity and ungodliness. While there may be some shows of redeeming value, by and large, television is not a safe thing. While **walking** through the numerous channels one may well come across a very provocative image. The fleshly temptation is to **stand** there, to look, to observe, and to absorb the image. The hope of the producer of this image is to get you to **sit** there or dwell there and watch the whole show. But the psalmist teaches us that the blessed man will keep walking right past such provocation and will not stand or sit for sin that demonstrates such contempt or scorn for the Holy One.

Lot knew of the exceeding wickedness of the men of Sodom. Yet, due to the great prosperity there, he chose to make his home and raise his family among the wicked. Thus, Lot walked among the ungodly, stood among sinners, and dwelt among those who scorned Elohim. While Lot may have had a righteous inclination, it was truly overshadowed by his choice of dwelling place. We should note here that Lot was captured and removed from this land of wickedness during the battle of the kings, yet he returned to live among the wicked after his rescue. The attachment that Lot and his wife felt toward Sodom is demonstrated even more emphatically in the second rescue of Lot. Even after the messengers of YHWH revealed the judgment about to befall Sodom and commanded Lot and his family to leave, they lingered and had to be forcibly removed.

**Genesis 19:15-16** *And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. <sup>16</sup>And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; YHWH being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.*

Even after being forcibly removed from their home within the city, Lot still negotiated with the messengers not to leave the area altogether.

**Genesis 19:17-22** *And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. <sup>18</sup>And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Adonai: <sup>19</sup>behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: <sup>20</sup>behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. <sup>21</sup>And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. <sup>22</sup>Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.*

There are several thoughts that come to mind in this passage. First, we should again compare Lot with Abraham. In the previous chapter we encountered Abraham risking his life to intercede for the lives of the righteous that may have been living in the cities under judgment. In our portion, we encounter Lot making no effort to intercede for the salvation of the cities around him or even for his own neighbors in Sodom; instead, Lot intercedes only to spare his own life.

Lot's negotiations remind me of Pharaoh's attempts to negotiate a compromise with Moses and the children of Israel. YHWH repeatedly commanded Pharaoh to let His people go, but Pharaoh always refused. This battle of the wills led to numerous plagues being thrust upon Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. In the process, Pharaoh weakened his position four times and tried to negotiate a compromise. Moses was asking that the children of Israel be allowed to go and worship their Elohim. Pharaoh refused and offered these solutions.

## Compromise 1

***Exodus 8:25** And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your Elohim **in the land**.*

## Compromise 2

***Exodus 8:28** And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to YHWH your Elohim in the wilderness; only ye shall **not go very far** away: intreat for me.*

## Compromise 3

***Exodus 10:11** Not so: go now **ye that are men**, and serve YHWH; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.*

## Compromise 4

***Exodus 10:24** And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve YHWH; **only let your flocks and your herds be stayed**: let your little ones also go with you.*

In the first of these compromises, Pharaoh offers the children of Israel to serve their Elohim, but without leaving the land to do it. In other words, "Believe whatever you want, but you don't have to separate from us or leave to do it."

In the second compromise, Pharaoh tells the children of Israel that they can go, but not too far. In other words, "You can believe whatever you want, but don't get carried away with it; don't become an extremist."

In the third compromise Pharaoh is willing to let the men go but not the children. This is a way of saying, "You can believe whatever you want and be as extreme as you want, but don't drag your children into it."

Finally, in the last compromise, Pharaoh is willing to let all the people go, but their herds and flocks were to remain behind. This is saying, "You can believe whatever it is you want to believe; just don't let it affect your job."

In many ways we may see Lot as compromising to stay in the world. The messengers of YHWH are trying to save Lot and his family, but Lot lingers in the city about to be destroyed. The messengers forcibly take Lot and his family by the hand and bring them out of the city and implore him to flee, yet after all of the mercy shown to him, Lot still negotiates not to remove himself too far. Even after the messengers have delivered them from the city about to be damned and granted them permission to flee to Zoar, Lot's wife still looked back. In other words, her orientation and identity was with Sodom and not in YHWH. Since she so associated herself with Sodom, she experienced the same judgment.

While it is not my intent to demonize Lot as being wicked, I see in Lot the typical man who wrestles daily with the two natures within him. On one hand, Lot demonstrates flashes of clear righteousness, such as when he shows great hospitality to the visitors and even risks his daughters' lives to protect his guests. But we also see very clear signs that Lot was just as equally motivated by his flesh and was drawn to prosperity, prestige, and worldliness.

There is a little of Lot in all of us, always trying to balance the extreme calling of YHWH upon our lives with the very real pressure to belong to the world around us. YHWH calls us to be witnesses and ambassadors of the kingdom of heaven to the world. The world, on the other hand, is always trying to get us to fit in and join them. Most believers, including myself, are always looking for a way to balance both. Like the alcoholic who is always looking for the excuse to have just one drink, the web user who refuses to put a pornography filter on his computer because it slows it down that one nanosecond of speed, or the perpetual dieter who keeps the pack of cookies hidden in the drawer or purse to keep their blood sugar

up, we all want to compromise with our flesh for the sake of peace and pleasure. Again and again throughout the whole of the Bible we are called to complete obedience. We are called to put off the old man and to be a new creature. We are called to crucify the flesh, not merely weaken it.

**Matthew 6:24** *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve Elohim and mammon.*

**Luke 9:62** *And Yeshua said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of Elohim.*

**Romans 13:14** *But put ye on the Master Yeshua Messiah, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

**1 Corinthians 5:7** *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Messiah our passover is sacrificed for us.*

**Ephesians 4:22** *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.*

**Colossians 3:9** *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*

**Revelation 3:15-16** *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. <sup>16</sup>So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

There are likewise numerous stories recounting disasters that resulted from incomplete or partial obedience. We have already mentioned the strife that was the result of Abram's failure to separate completely from his kinfolk and his father's house. We may also recall the story of King Saul, who did not fulfill the Sovereign's command to utterly destroy the Amalakites, including King Agag. Saul decided to let the king live and to keep the livestock as well to use for an offering.

**1 Samuel 15:22-23** *And Samuel said, Hath YHWH as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of YHWH? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. <sup>23</sup>For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of YHWH, He hath also rejected thee from being king.*

We may recall that Haman, who sought to utterly destroy the children of Israel in the days of Esther, was a descendant of King Agag.

**Esther 8:5** *And said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces.*

We may likewise recall the story of the man of Elohim who was sent to deliver a message to King Jeroboam and was told to go one way and return another. But the man of Elohim was deceived by a corrupt prophet and disobeyed the voice of YHWH.

**1 Kings 13:9-10** *For so was it charged me by the word of YHWH, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. <sup>10</sup>So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.*

**1 Kings 13:16-17** *And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: <sup>17</sup>for it was said to me by the word of YHWH, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.*

**1 Kings 13:21-24** *And he cried unto the man of Elohim that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith YHWH, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of YHWH, and hast not kept the commandment which YHWH thy Elohim commanded thee, <sup>22</sup>but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which YHWH did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. <sup>23</sup>And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. <sup>24</sup>And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.*

The apostle Peter gives us a peculiar view of Lot, referring to him as a righteous man who was vexed by the wickedness around him.

**2 Peter 2:6-8** *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; <sup>7</sup>and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: <sup>8</sup>(for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.)*

In Peter's view, Lot was considered to be a righteous man, but his soul was vexed and accosted by what he saw around him. From this statement there is much we can learn. While all of us live in a world of sin, we are not to stand or dwell in it. We must daily strengthen our spirit man through prayer, fellowship with other believers, and the study of the Word. As Shaul exhorted Timothy, we are to study to show ourselves approved.

**2 Timothy 2:15** *Study to shew thyself approved unto Elohim, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

We are not to compromise with the world. We are to be holy and perfect. We should so love and fear YHWH that belonging to Him is all we desire. As members of the body of Messiah, this is where our identity should be found. If we are still looking to belong to the world, then we cannot be citizens of the commonwealth of Israel nor be ambassadors to the kingdom of heaven. Our death and resurrection must be complete. We cannot belong to the body of Messiah and the world.

**2 Corinthians 6:14-17** *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>And what concord hath Messiah with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? <sup>16</sup>And what agreement hath the temple of Elohim with idols? For ye are the temple of the living Elohim; as Elohim hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people. <sup>17</sup>Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith YHWH, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.*

Our submission to the yoke of Torah must likewise be complete. We cannot submit to two masters. Therefore, we may understand Lot to be a righteous man in comparison with those around him, but clearly his righteousness was weakened by his compromising with the wickedness of his surroundings.

It was said of Noah that he was perfect in his generation.

**Genesis 6:9** *These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with Elohim.*

May we not also say of Lot that he was a righteous man compared to the people around him? Thus, we may understand from the story of Lot that righteousness may be by degree. All of our lives stand in the balance. Our hope and goal is that throughout our days we are always growing in knowledge, wisdom, understanding, fear, and love for YHWH. Our hope is that as we grow, we will perfect our character so that it may more and more be identified with the body of Messiah and more perfectly manifest the image of the Holy One. The sages have said we should live each day as though the world were perfectly balanced in the scales of judgment, and that our next thought, word, or deed could tip the scales either to good or evil.

We may conclude this section by simply stating that Abraham interceded for the righteous men of Sodom, not specifically for Lot. YHWH remembered Abraham's prayer and rescued Lot. Therefore, we may conclude that both Abraham's prayer and Lot's righteousness (as imperfect as it may have been) were enough to evoke YHWH'S mercy. The definitive answer to the question of why Lot was rescued is found in the text itself.

**Genesis 19:16** *And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; YHWH being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.*

Before we go any further in our study, I would like to address another pertinent issue – the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Traditionally, the sin of Sodom is seen as the sin of homosexuality. While homosexuality clearly is a part of the reason for Sodom's judgment, it certainly is not the whole story. Let us, therefore, take a little deeper look into the sin that provoked the wrath of the Sovereign One.

In the story relating the strife and separation of Lot from Abram, we are told that both men were very rich and that the land was not able to support both men and their herds. We were also informed at that time that the Canaanites and Perizzites were in the land.

**Genesis 13:7** *And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.*

We may assume from this that the men of Sodom were Canaanites, Perizzites, or perhaps one of the other groups mentioned in the Covenant of the Pieces.

**Genesis 15:18-21** *In the same day YHWH made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: <sup>19</sup>the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup>and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, <sup>21</sup>and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.*

Later in the Torah we are told the reason for the expulsion of these people. In the eighteenth and twentieth chapters of the book of Leviticus, YHWH prohibits the children of Israel from participating in idolatrous worship practices and a number of perverse sexual practices, including adultery, incest, bestiality, and homosexuality.

**Leviticus 18:17-29** *Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness. <sup>18</sup>Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time. <sup>19</sup>Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness. <sup>20</sup>Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her. <sup>21</sup>And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy Elohim: I am YHWH. <sup>22</sup>Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. <sup>23</sup>Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand*

before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. <sup>24</sup>Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: <sup>25</sup>and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. <sup>26</sup>Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: <sup>27</sup>(for all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) <sup>28</sup>that the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. <sup>29</sup>For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.

**Leviticus 20:13** *If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*

**Leviticus 20:23** *And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.*

Clearly homosexuality is an abomination unto the Sovereign One. There are liberal theologians who try to make a distinction between homosexual relations and homosexual rape. Others try to make a distinction between homosexual behavior and homosexual deviance. Let me respond to these ideas with a lengthy quote from Victor Hamilton's commentary on Genesis.

*Much debate has focused on these two verses [19:7-8] and the meaning of "know." In the OT the Hebrew root yd' and its derivatives occur 1,058 times. Fifteen of the 948 instances of the verb refer to sexual knowledge. These fifteen passages include instances where the man is the subject, where the woman is the subject, and where man is both subject and object. While it is well known that Heb. yada' can connote sexual knowledge, what is not as well known is that the Hebrew shares this feature with other Semitic languages. What is its meaning in Gen. 19:5? Some maintain that "know" in this verse should not be included with the fifteen passages mentioned above. Rather, a case is made that yada' carries here its normal meaning of "become acquainted with." This viewpoint argues that the sin of the Sodomites is a violation of the rules of hospitality. Because he is only a sojourner, Lot has exceeded his privileges. Since he has no authority to monopolize the time of these visitors, the men of Sodom request the opportunity to meet and get to know these two outsiders.*

*This interpretation can only be evaluated as wild and fanciful. For when Lot responds by offering his daughters, "who have never known a man" (v.8), it becomes clear that the issue is intercourse and not friendship. Lot would never have made such an unusual suggestion if the request was only for a handshake and moments of chitchat.*

*Among those who agree that the issue is sexual, the question arises as to whether the issue is homosexual relations per se, or homosexual rape. The answer depends on how one chooses to translate yada'. For instance, compare Speiser's "bring them out to us that we may get familiar with them" with JB's "hand them over to us so that we may abuse them."*

*We see at least four problems with the view that the prohibition here is only on homosexual rape. First, nowhere in the OT does the verb yada' have the nuance of "abuse" or "violate." Second, the OT uses unmistakable language to relate rape incidents. Thus the Shechemites "seized" and "lay with" and "humbled" Dinah (Gen. 34:2). Amnon "forced" and "lay with" his half-sister Tamar (2 Sam. 13:14). Similarly the biblical laws about rape also use these terms: "seize," "lie with" (Deut. 22:25-27). Third, this interpretation forces one meaning on "know" in v. 5 (i.e. abuse) but a different meaning on "know" three verses later (i.e. have intercourse with), for it is unlikely that Lot*

*is saying: "I have two daughters who have never been abused." Fourth, such an interpretation forces these incredible words in Lot's mouth: "Do not rape my visitors. Here are my daughters, both virgins—rape them!" Clearly, then, the incident frowns on homosexual relations for whatever reason.<sup>1</sup>*

We may, therefore, declare without equivocation that the men of Sodom were practicing that which was an abomination unto YHWH and were therefore judged accordingly. To try and defend the practice of homosexuality by drawing a distinction between homosexual relations and temple prostitution and rape is to act like Lot himself and negotiate with the Sovereign One in order to protect sin. The Torah condemns homosexuality whether or not it is used as part of a cultic practice or as part of a violent act. Homosexual relations in any form are an abomination to the Sovereign One.

With this being said, we should not ignore the fact that homosexual relations were not the whole of Sodom's sins. The authors of the Tosefta<sup>2</sup> state that arrogance and selfishness were the reasons that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

*The men of Sodom acted arrogantly before the Omnipresent only on account of the good which he lavished on them, since it is said "as for the land, out of it comes bread...its stones are the place of sapphires, and it has dust of gold...that path, no bird of prey knows...the proud beasts have not trodden (Job 28:5-8)." Said the men of Sodom, "since bread come forth from our land, and silver and gold come forth from our land, we do not need people to come to us; they come to us only to take things away from us, let us go and forget how things are usually done among us."<sup>3</sup>*

The sages taught that the men of Sodom had adopted wicked practices in order to make the city an undesirable place to live. By doing such, the men of Sodom protected their fertile and prosperous oasis from those who might have sought to share in its wealth. We must now ask if there is any Biblical evidence of such behavior.

We may recall that the reason given for Lot's decision to dwell in Sodom was because it was indeed a beautiful and fertile area. In fact, the Torah compares the plain of Sodom to the Garden of Eden.

**Genesis 13:10** *And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before YHWH destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of YHWH, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.*

We are also told at this time how great the wickedness of this area was. The prophet Isaiah later compares the men of Judah to those of Sodom and Gomorrah. Let us take note, however, of what the prophet emphasizes as their wickedness.

**Isaiah 1:9-17** *Except YHWH of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. <sup>10</sup>Hear the word of YHWH, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our Elohim, ye people of Gomorrah. <sup>11</sup>To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith YHWH: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. <sup>12</sup>When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? <sup>13</sup>Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. <sup>14</sup>Your new moons and your*

<sup>1</sup> The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50, Victor P. Hamilton, William B. Eerdmans Publishing House, Pp. 33-34

<sup>2</sup> The Tosefta are rabbinic writings that were written and collected around 300 C.E. between the writing of the Mishna (200 C.E.) and the Talmud (400 C.E.).

<sup>3</sup> Tosefta, Volume One, Sotah, Jacob Neusner, Editor, Hendrickson Publishers, Pg. 841

*appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them.  
<sup>15</sup>And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye  
 make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. <sup>16</sup>Wash you, make you  
 clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; <sup>17</sup>learn to  
 do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.*

It is not homosexuality that the prophet points to; it is their failure to do justice, to show mercy, and to care for the widows and the orphans. Clearly Isaiah understands that the elders of Sodom and Gomorrah were likewise irresponsible with the wealth and prosperity that the Creator bestowed upon them. Thus, while homosexual behavior is indeed an abomination to the Holy One, we must be careful not to so fixate upon the provocative that we overlook the equally abominable practices of selfishness, arrogance, injustice, heartlessness, mercilessness, callousness, and inhospitableness. Here we may recall the teachings of Yeshua, who rebuked the Pharisees for keeping the letter of the law concerning tithing but neglected the very heart of the Torah.

**Matthew 23:23** *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

Therefore, we may see that Sodom and Gomorrah were not judged simply for homosexual behavior; rather, they were judged for a complete deprivation of heart and soul. The city was judged because the deprivation was complete. Notice the inclusive language of the text:

**Genesis 19:4** *But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, **both old and young**, all the people from every quarter.*

**Genesis 19:11** *And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, **both small and great**: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.*

So thorough was the depravity of these cities that it involved both the young and the old, from the simplest or least of citizens to the greatest and most prominent of citizens. Lot alone seems to be the only exception.

Our portion concludes with the story of Lot and his two daughters. There is some debate about the number of children Lot had. Traditionally, many teach that Lot had two single daughters and also married daughters. I would suggest to you that there were only two daughters. We have already mentioned that Lot offered the depraved men of Sodom his two maiden daughters. The fact that Lot mentions that his daughters are virgins may imply that although they are still living in their father's house, they are of marrying age and possibly even engaged. We should note that engagement carried the same weight as being married.

**Exodus 21:9** *And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters.*

**Deuteronomy 22:23-24** *If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; <sup>24</sup>then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.*

If these two virgin daughters were, in fact, engaged, then it is possible that the sons-in-law that Lot talks to later are his daughters' fiancés.

**Genesis 19:14** *And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for YHWH will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.*

We should not, therefore, assume that there were any children other than the two daughters who were with him throughout this adventure.

We should also note that during the conflict with the men of the city, these depraved citizens speak against Lot as yet being a stranger whom they have tolerated living among them.

**Genesis 19:9** *And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.*

Lot is clearly isolated from these men. Yet, it is also clear that Lot intended to give his daughters in marriage to these corrupt men. When the judgment falls and the brimstone hits the fan, as well as everything else in the cities of the plain, Lot and his daughters run with fear to Zoar. The Torah then tells us that Lot and his daughters moved away from the city of Zoar to the mountains because they were afraid, but it does not tell us what they were afraid of.

**Genesis 19:30** *And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.*

What happens next in the story is evidence of the effect living in such depravity had upon the daughters of Lot.

Our portion tells us that the daughters of Lot schemed to sleep with their father in order to conceive children with him. Many of the sages teach that since there is no overt condemnation of their behavior, the Creator understood that their intention was innocent. Those who hold this view believe that when the daughters of Lot saw the utter destruction of the cities of the plain, they probably thought that the whole world had been destroyed; therefore, they feared that the only man left in the world was their father Lot. The daughters, therefore, sought to save the human race by having children with their father. This may, at first, seem like a reasonable assumption until we recall that they escaped the destruction of Sodom and lived in Zoar. The fact that Zoar was populated is made evident in its inclusion in the story of the battle of the kings in chapter 14. Zoar was not merely a region; it was a kingdom.

**Genesis 14:2** *That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.*

Some may still defend this intention on the part of Lot's daughters by stating that because of the connection between Sodom and Zoar in the previous story, the girls feared that Zoar too would be destroyed. But there is nothing in the text that would suggest such a thought. This is especially true since YHWH allowed Lot and his family to take refuge there.

I would like to suggest another possible solution to this question. It is clear from the text that Lot and his family were not totally accepted as citizens of the city of Sodom. Since the men of Sodom felt that Lot was judging them and since Lot and his daughters were the only ones to be spared the judgment, the people of Zoar feared Lot and his daughters as the source of the judgment. I would suggest that the girls' statement that there was no man that would come unto them was because the men feared what might happen to them if they married Lot's daughters. Recognizing that no man would marry them because of their perceived role in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, they sought their future security and fulfillment through an incestuous relationship with their father. The fact that the daughters plied their father with wine would seem to indicate that in a sober state, Lot would not have accepted their plan or participated in it. There is, therefore, in some sense, the idea that Lot's daughters forced themselves upon their father. Nahum M. Sarna points out this great and sad irony in the story of Lot.

*His (Lot's) story ends on an inglorious and ironic note. At the beginning of the story he was willing to let the virginity of his daughters be forcibly defiled, without even informing them, in order to save lives. Now, in order to "maintain life," his daughters have lost their virginity by forcing themselves upon him without his knowledge.<sup>4</sup>*

I will be honest and confess that my greatest fear is that come the day of judgment, my righteousness will be seen as no better than that of Lot's. I pray that we may all learn from our brother the dangers of incomplete obedience, compromise with the world around us, and the impact that our choices have on the lives and walks of our children.

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<sup>4</sup> JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, Nahum M. Sarna, Jewish Publication Society, Pg. 140

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