



LESSON 10

God judges Sodom and Gomorrah

GENESIS 18:16-19:29



God is a just judge.



“Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”

(Gen 18:25).

Supporting Truths

1. Because God is just, He hates sin and destroys the unrepentant.
2. Because God is just, He shows mercy for the sake of the righteous.
3. Because God is just, He wants His people to be just.
4. Sin deserves punishment because it perverts God’s standard.
5. Sin turns even the righteous away from wisdom, integrity, and faith.

Objectives

1. Describe how God justly punished the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. Explain why God rescued Lot.
3. Show how the story begins and ends by teaching Abraham about justice.
4. Explain how the Sodomites perverted God’s design for hospitality and marriage.
5. Evaluate Lot’s poor choices and their just consequences.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God judges Sodom and Gomorrah • Genesis 18:16–19:29



Lesson Summary

Sodom and Gomorrah demonstrates God's justice. By letting Abraham question Him and by rescuing Lot, God showed that justice is full of mercy. But by destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, God showed that justice severely punishes the wicked. Abraham was to teach these lessons to his children so that they would live in righteousness before a just God (Gen 18:17–19).

Spotlight on the Gospel

God's severe judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah is a clear warning that God punishes sin. God's wrath is coming against sin, but all who turn from sin and trust in Jesus will be saved for His sake, just as Lot was spared for Abraham's sake.

LAST WEEK



**Abraham and Sarah
doubt God**
*Genesis 16:1–6;
17:15–21; 18:1–15*

THIS WEEK



**God judges Sodom
and Gomorrah**
Genesis 18:16–19:29

NEXT WEEK



God sends baby Isaac
Genesis 21:1–14

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

God is a just judge.

When Abraham was nearly one hundred years old, the LORD appeared to him and said: “I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless” (Gen 17:1). Through Abraham, God was calling a people to dwell with Him in holiness. But God did not just tell Abraham to be blameless, He taught him about His own justice so that Abraham could teach justice to his children. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is a real-life demonstration of God’s justice.



THINK ABOUT IT
In His justice God is merciful.

God taught Abraham justice (18:16–33)

Genesis 18:18–19 reveals that God chose to include Sodom and Gomorrah in

Abraham’s story so that Abraham could teach his children to be **just**, or blameless, as God is just. Justice begins with gathering the correct facts. Even though God already knows all, He says in Genesis 18:21, “I will go down now and see,” in order to teach that a good judge investigates and does not judge carelessly. He even illustrates the principle of requiring two witnesses by sending the two angels (Gen 18:22; cf. Deut 19:15).

As the two angels left for Sodom, the Lord stayed with Abraham in order to continue teaching him. He did this by allowing Abraham to question Him. God let Abraham be the cross-examiner, allowing Him to investigate God. Abraham questioned God to confirm that God is indeed the “judge of all the earth” who deals justly (18:25). Abraham assumed that justice is to punish the wicked but spare the righteous, and God confirms this.

The **wicked** are those who are evil and do not obey God’s law, while the **righteous** are those who are blameless and obey God’s law. But God goes further, teaching that justice includes mercy for the sake of the righteous. God will even spare the wicked for a time for the sake of the righteous. Even if only ten righteous men lived in the Sodom and Gomorrah, God would spare the cities (18:32).

Sodom and Gomorrah deserved punishment (19:1–11)

Unfortunately, when the angels traveled the 30 miles or so from Mamre to Sodom to investigate, they could not find even ten righteous men. Lot appears to be the only one.

Lot was sitting at the gate, the cultural and commercial hub of the city. When Lot first arrived in Genesis 13, he lived in a tent near Sodom. Then he moved into the city. Now he is thoroughly integrated into the life and leadership of the ungodly city.

Despite his poor choice to live in a wicked place, Lot still practiced righteousness by offering hospitality to the two strangers when no one else would. In a time when travel was difficult and dangerous and there were no hotels, hospitality was highly valued. Even idolaters often considered lack of hospitality a serious sin against the gods.

Instead of hospitably caring for the strangers, the Sodomites desired to abuse the strangers for their own wicked pleasure. The angels should have been safe to spend the night in the town square just inside the city gate. It was not unusual for visitors to a city at this time of year to sleep out in the open air at night. But the men of Sodom were thoroughly corrupt. Every male, whether young or old, participated in this evil (19:4). They violated not only hospitality, but also God’s design for relationships.

To protect his guests, Lot instead offered the mob his two daughters—daughters whose purity and lives he should have protected (19:8). Lot’s sense of righteousness was dull. Lot had lived too long in the middle of evil. He was a righteous man who had compromised too often, starting with his first decision to move near Sodom.

THINK ABOUT IT
The men of Sodom are an illustration of the depravity described in Romans 1:18–30.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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The men of Sodom refused to listen to Lot. As wicked men often do when rebuked, they got angry with Lot and accused him of being judgmental (19:9). The mob physically attacked Lot, and even after the angels rescued Lot and blinded the mob, the wicked

men would not give up their desire to sin until they were thoroughly exhausted (19:9–11). The verdict was clear: Sodom and its neighboring cities deserved to be destroyed. Because they were full of unrighteousness and would not repent, God was just to destroy them with fire.

daughters marry men of Sodom. Also, when he tried to warn his sons-in-law, they thought he was joking (Gen 19:14). Apparently they were not used to Lot speaking so urgently about righteousness. Are our families and neighbors used to us speaking to them about righteousness?

Even after being warned, Lot delayed (19:16). He probably did not want to leave behind all the possessions and comforts he had accumulated in the city. He was saved only because God, in His compassion, sent the angels to force him to leave. After leaving, Lot still wavered, complaining that the escape was too difficult (19:19). Again God was merciful and allowed Lot to escape to Zoar, which God did not burn up along with the other cities of the plain. God is merciful in His justice, but His justice is still perfectly fair. The cities burned with fire from heaven.

Also, even though Lot survived, he felt the pain that comes from compromise. By choosing to live in such an evil place, Lot had allowed his wife to be too attached to the pleasures of the world (Luke 17:32–33), so she looked back and died. Finally, because of his compromises, Lot's story ends with him losing everything and being alone in a cave with two immoral daughters.

Genesis 19:27 pictures Abraham viewing the destruction, and verse 29 concludes with "God remembered Abraham." God had taught Abraham what it meant to be just. God exemplified justice as the compassionate judge of the world, and God showed the severe consequences that come upon those who fail to live just lives. This is the lesson Abraham was to teach to his children, and this is the lesson we must teach to our own.



THINK ABOUT IT

The cross of Christ provides the clearest picture of how divine justice and mercy meet in undeserved compassion.

God rescued Lot but burned Sodom and Gomorrah (19:12–29)

Although there were not ten righteous men, God still proved his faithfulness to Abraham by rescuing Lot. In so doing, God again

showed Abraham what it means to be just. Justice is punishing the wicked and saving the righteous. In fact, this kind of justice is full of mercy, because even righteous men would perish unless God had compassion on them. **Compassion** is feeling bad for someone who is hurt.

Lot was a righteous man (2 Pet 2:7), but he was not the unwavering man of faith that Abraham was (Gen 19). Lot was willing to let his own daughters be abused and probably killed, and he was willing to let his

Lesson Outline

God is a just judge.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God said He would save Sodom and Gomorrah if just 10 righteous people lived there (18:16–33).
2. The people in Sodom and Gomorrah kept sinning (19:1–11).
3. God burned up Sodom and Gomorrah but saved Lot (19:12–29).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **God taught Abraham justice (18:16–33).**
 - God commanded righteousness and justice to Abraham and his descendants (18:17–19).
 - God investigated the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah in order to judge justly (18:20–22).
 - God let Abraham question Him in order to show what it means to be a just judge (18:23–33).
 - As a just judge, God would spare the cities even if only 10 righteous people lived there (18:32).
2. **Sodom and Gomorrah deserved punishment (19:1–11).**
 - Lot was the only one who offered food and shelter to the angels (19:1–3).
 - All the men of Sodom wanted to use the angels for their own evil purposes (19:4–5).
3. **God rescued Lot but burned Sodom and Gomorrah (19:12–29).**
 - When Lot protected the angels, the men of Sodom attacked Lot (19:6–9).
 - Even after the angels blinded them, the men still tried to commit their sin (19:10–11).
 - The angels graciously warned Lot and his whole family to flee (19:12–13).
 - When Lot hesitated, the angels showed compassion by forcing him to flee (19:15–17).
 - When Lot complained, the angels showed compassion by letting him flee to Zoar (19:18–23).
 - God poured fire on Sodom and Gomorrah and turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt (19:24–26).
 - Abraham saw that God was a just judge, destroying the cities but sparing Lot (19:27–29).

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who did Abraham want to save in Sodom?**
Abraham's nephew, Lot, and his family living in Sodom.
- 2. What happened to the angels when they went to Sodom?**
The wicked men of Sodom wanted to hurt the angels, but the angels made their eyes blind so they couldn't find the door.
- 3. How did God punish Sodom?**
God sent fire from the sky and burned houses, crops, and people.
- 4. Did God answer Abraham's prayer for Lot?**
Yes.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. How did God feel about what the people in Sodom and Gomorrah were doing?**
God was very angry with them because they had greatly disobeyed Him.
- 2. Why did God allow Abraham to question Him?**
God let Abraham question Him in order to show what it means to be a just judge.
- 3. What did Lot say to the angels who came to visit him?**
Lot asked them to come into his house because he knew how sinful the people of Sodom were.
- 4. Did the people of Sodom act kindly or wickedly to the angels and Lot?**
Wickedly. They wanted the two angels who were inside Lot's house (Gen 19:5). The sinful Sodomites even tried to take Lot, but the angels protected Lot and his family.
- 5. What did the angels tell Lot they were going to do?**
The angels told Lot that they were going to destroy the city because of its sin.
- 6. What happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah?**
God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah—nothing in them remained alive.
- 7. Why did God save Lot?**
God is merciful in His justice. God was merciful and allowed Lot to escape to Zoar.
- 8. What did Abraham learn about God?**
God remembered Abraham and taught him justice, and this is the lesson Abraham was to teach to his children.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

ESCAPE FROM SODOM

Lot had to leave Sodom in a hurry. In this game, children will pretend to escape from Sodom. Use masking tape to form a maze or path on the floor. Line children up on one side of the maze. Use a kitchen timer as a countdown timer. When you say “go,” the children must walk through the maze one at a time, without going outside the maze lines. They must do this before the timer goes off. Do this until everyone gets through the maze.

GOD'S PATIENCE

Before beginning the lesson, set a kitchen timer for 30 seconds. Ask the children whether they think that God is patient. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about how time ran out for sinful Sodom and Gomorrah.



ILLUSTRATE

MAGNIFYING GLASS

Bring in a magnifying glass. During the lesson show the children the magnifying glass and explain how a magnifying glass allows us to see things that are very small. Tell the children that God sent two angels to Sodom to see just how bad the sin was in Sodom. Before God punished Sodom, He wanted to make sure that He found all the righteous people.

TOTAL DESTRUCTION

Build a large city with blocks before the lesson. To illustrate the total destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, tell the children to imagine that your block city is Sodom and Gomorrah. Then dramatically sweep all the blocks off the table. Make sure the children are far enough away from the table that they don't get hit with any flying blocks.



APPLY

CITY ON FIRE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft background page, Sodom and Gomorrah city outline cutout, orange tissue paper, red tissue paper, yellow tissue paper, glue, scissors, crayons.

Directions: Pass out a city outline cutout to each child and ask children to color the city with crayons. Pass out a background page to each child. Have children glue the colored city outline onto the background. Help children tear strips of colored tissue paper and glue them onto the background page. Roll up some pieces of tissue paper into marble size balls and glue them on the page as well.



City on Fire
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

COUNTDOWN

Show the class a large container full of colored beads. (Take out all the yellow beads before class.) Let them look at it during class, but don't open it. After reading Abraham's conversation with God about finding righteous people in Sodom, ask the children whether they can find 50 yellow beads in the container. Then ask if they can find just 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, and finally 10. Then dump the beads out on the floor, and let the children look for yellow beads. After they see that there are no yellow beads, explain to them that God could not find 10 righteous people in Sodom.

FREEZE TAG GAME

Select one child to be Abraham and one to be "Disobedient Don" (or "Disobedient Dawn"). Bring two different hats to distinguish these children from the rest of the class. When Abraham touches a person, that person gets to stay in the game. If Disobedient Don touches a person, that person is out and has to sit in Sodom!



ILLUSTRATE

WHAT IS SIN?

During the lesson, ask the children to tell you what sin is. Explain to the children that there was a city where people were sinning in all those ways and more, and that there was only one man in the city who remembered God.

THAT'S NOT FAIR!

Give each child a piece of candy before the lesson begins. Tell them to pay special attention to your instructions. Explain that as each child receives their piece of candy they are to immediately put it under their chair. Once the candy is under the chair, the children may not touch, look at, or talk about the candy (their's or their neighbor's) until the lesson is over. Continue on with the lesson. As soon as one of the children breaks the rules, stop the lesson and take the candy away from all the children (including those who did nothing wrong). Ask the children if this is fair. Explain that God is perfectly fair, or just. He sent two angels to Sodom to see if there was anyone righteous in the city before He destroyed it.



APPLY

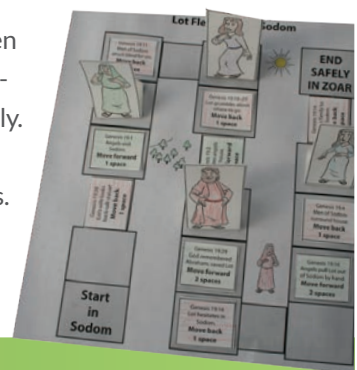
LOT FLEES WICKED SODOM

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft pages, scissors, glue, pennies, crayons

Directions: Ask children to color the game board, game board pieces, and game characters. Next, cut out the game board pieces and glue them onto the squares of your choosing on the game board (not all spaces on game board will be covered). Select a game character and assemble him/her by gluing the tops together and folding and gluing the bottoms together (creating a triangle shape that stands upright).

Play the game by flipping the penny on your turn to see how many spaces you may move forward (tails = 1 space and heads = 2 spaces). If you land on a square with additional instructions then move your character accordingly. First person to reach Zoar wins.



Lot Flees Wicked Sodom
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

WHAT'S FAIR?

Discuss fairness with your class. Ask them the following questions: Have you ever been at school when the whole class got in trouble and you didn't do anything wrong? Have you been in trouble at home for something you didn't do? It seems unfair, doesn't it? Have you ever been punished for something when others were not? Sometimes we have a wrong view of fairness. If we really got what we deserved, God would send us to hell. In today's lesson Abraham is going to pray on behalf of a city and is going to plead with God to be, in a sense, fair. In the end we learn that God was just and, at the same time, more than fair.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

Bring in different a set of crutches, a wheelchair, or bandages. Ask the children how they feel when they see someone using one of these items. Do they feel compassion for them? Explain that in today's lesson they will see how God had compassion on Lot and his family.



ILLUSTRATE

FIRE FROM HEAVEN

Bring in various items that keep us dry when it rains (umbrella, rain coat, boots, poncho, etc.). Explain that all these items help to protect us from getting wet when it rains. Tell the children that in today's lesson God rained down fire from Heaven on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Ask the children if they know what can protect us from God's wrath against sin. Explain that only God's grace, received through faith (Eph 2:8–9), is able to protect us from God's judgment.

SCALES OF JUSTICE

Bring in a balancing scale and 15-20 Starburst candies. Put different amounts of Starbursts on each side of the scale so that the scale is unbalanced. Ask the children if this is fair, or just. Place an even amount of Starbursts on both sides of the scale so that the scale is balanced. Ask the children if this is fair, or just. Give each child a candy. Explain that God is a fair, or just, judge.

Variation: This illustration still works without a scale. Just hold your hands out in front of you with the Starbursts in them.



APPLY

HOW MANY RIGHTEOUS?

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Play in groups of four. You will need one sheet of "How Many Righteous?" cards (see craft book) for each player. Cut the cards apart and shuffle them.

To begin, have the four players sit in a circle, and deal each player four cards. Place the remaining cards in the center of the circle; this is the draw pile. On his turn, a player may do two things. First, he may lay down a card. Cards must be laid down according to the order that Abraham mentioned in his prayers to God (50, 45, 40, 30, 20, and then 10). The "Lot" card should be laid down last. So a player may lay down a card on his first turn only if he has a 50. After laying down a card, he should take a card from the draw pile. (Each player must have four cards in his hands at all times.) Second, he may trade one unwanted card from his hand for one from another player's hand. (If play stalls, add one more card from the pile to each child's hand.) Then it is the next player's turn. The first player to lay down all his cards wins.