
Day 7 - January 7

Period of the Patriarchs (2100 -1525 BCE)

Appearance of Heavenly Visitors

Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

The Scheme of Lot's Daughters

Readings: *Genesis 18:1-19:38*

Reflections:

- The story of the three visitors, God and the two angels who will destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, is fascinating. It has to be the one of the closest parallels in the Old Testament to the incarnation of Jesus. God is obviously in human, physical form.
- It is interesting that Abraham and Lot both seem to recognize God and the angels. How they are recognized is not explained.
- Great line: "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by." This shows Abraham's deep desire for relationship and friendship with God.
- Sarah's laugh of disbelief doesn't need much explanation. It simply shows that we can relate to the people of the Old Testament. Both in laughing and then covering it up with denial.
- Here is another good line: God speaking. "Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time (God has a very clear plan) and Sarah will have a son." This shows God's ongoing revelation to Abraham as he shares more new information as well as God's plan according to his perfect timing.
- God then gives Abraham more encouragement about his descendents before explaining he is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Interesting language, "...outcry that has reached me." The idea of an outcry covering a great distance suggests the magnitude of the outcry and how bad the situation has become.
- Abraham's request for mercy for Sodom and Gomorrah (obviously for Lot and his family) demonstrates the power of his friendship with the Lord as well as the greatness of God's mercy. If a city only has ten righteous people in it, there is still hope for that city. This is a key insight into the power of God's people to be salt (preserve) and light (reveal truth) to the most lost of the lost.

- Lot recognizes the angels and gives them holy bread (bread without yeast). Even though this guy has been immersed in a sinful culture, he does respond with humility and faith to the coming of the angels.
- The men of Sodom and Gomorrah come to have sex with the angels (do angels look attractive?). That Lot offers his daughters shows how completely depraved this city is and the impact it has had on Lot. Remember again how much mercy God is showing by not destroying the city, or at least saving out of the city those that are somewhat close to being righteous based on a trust relationship with God. Lot offers his daughters to have sex with strangers. (His daughters in the future sleep with their dad, and they are viewed by God as the righteous ones worthy of being saved?) In this story, a basic faith in God even when a person is completely messed up is shown still to be what God bases his salvation on. Incredible mercy!
- It only takes two angels to wipe out a city. Frightening! Actually the reality may be that it only takes one angel to wipe out a city but regardless, here is a vivid picture contrasting the power of God and his forces compared to human powers.
- The angels lead them out by the hand "...the Lord was merciful to them." A great picture of how personal God is in saving us from the messes we find ourselves in.
- God's wrath and destruction is complete. We should remember both the mercy and the holiness of God.
- The simple statement about Lot's wife looking back is frightening. After all of that revelation and mercy from God, looking back (a sign of longing for sin and disbelief in God) brings her under judgment. This should make us glad we don't live during this time but live in the kingdom of Christ. Even greater grace is revealed in Christ.
- Lot and his daughters live in seclusion, hidden in a cave because of fear. This is a great picture of what fear does to our lives. Fear causes us to hide our true selves and in turn, fall into emotional poverty.
- Lot's daughters do the same thing as Sarah did with Ishmael and compromise God's best to extend their lineage. The Ammonites became the future enemies of Israel. Beware of making Ishmael's by not waiting on God's perfect timing.
- How can we create an Ishmael? It is by unbelief. Where does our unbelief lead us? What are the actions we are tempted to take when we are full of fear and doubt? Whether it is looking in the wrong places for our love and security or running away from what God is calling us to do, we create Ishmael's when we choose to be our own saviors and take matters into our own hands.