

# God of Our Fathers: Genesis

## Lesson 10: Sodom and Gomorrah

### Lesson Introduction

- Describe a time when you negotiated with someone to change a situation.
- Why did you feel it was important to bargain?
- How did you feel during the negotiations?
- What was the outcome?

### Lesson Objectives

By the end of the lesson, learners will:

- Describe the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah
- Explain why God was displeased with the inhabitants
- Discuss Abraham's persistence in negotiating with God
- Express understanding of who God is

### Background for the Scripture

Genesis 14:1-16 relates the story of how the inhabitants of Sodom and their neighbors fought against the opposing King of Elam and his allies. Abraham's nephew Lot, who lived in Sodom at the time, was taken prisoner. Hearing that Lot had been captured, Abraham marshaled his men and pursued his nephew's captors. Abraham subsequently rescued Lot and brought back all his goods. Shortly after this battle, Abraham met King Melchizedek of Salem and paid tribute to him with ten percent of the booty.

Genesis 19 describes the depravity of Sodom. God completely destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone (Genesis 19:24-25) because of their unrepentant wickedness. This destruction was carried out in spite of Abraham's efforts to negotiate with God to save the city. Scholars have said, "Sodom is remembered as a wicked city that brought divine wrath" upon itself. Genesis 9:1-11 provides examples of "attempted sexual perversity" and "gross inhospitality" taking place in and around the city (Achtemeier, 1996, p. 1046).

### Genesis 18 (KJV)

18 And the LORD 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 eat.

<sup>9</sup> And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

<sup>14</sup> Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

<sup>15</sup> Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

<sup>16</sup> And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

<sup>17</sup> And the LORD 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 the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

<sup>20</sup> And the LORD 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.

<sup>22</sup> And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

<sup>24</sup> Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

<sup>25</sup> 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?

<sup>26</sup> And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

<sup>27</sup> And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes:

<sup>28</sup> Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

<sup>29</sup> And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

<sup>30</sup> And he said unto him, Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

<sup>31</sup> And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

<sup>32</sup> And he said, Oh let not the LORD 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 the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

## **Examining the Scripture**

1. Why was God displeased with the inhabitants of Sodom?
2. What does Abraham's persistence in negotiating with God say about Abraham?

## **Applying the Scripture**

1. What does God's willingness to negotiate say about God?
2. Using a Bible concordance as a resource, describe other examples in which God changed God's mind about a situation in the Bible.

## **Quest to Know God Activity**

1. What does this scriptural account reveal about God?
2. List two or three characteristics you discerned about God as you went through this lesson.
3. What statement can you make about the God of our fathers that you can pass down to future generations?