

## Have God's Ear

- \* So — What is going on in vv. 22-33?
  - ◆ Abraham is exploring God's nature by probing His mind!
  - ◆ In particular, he wants to know how God's justice works
- \* What is different about the communication pattern in v. 23?
  - ◆ Abraham INITIATES the conversation .. Providing more evidence of Abraham's growing relationship with God

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## God's Ear .. Continued

- \* Most commentators focus on vv. 22-33 as an example of intercessory prayer
- \* In the sense that Abraham is both ...
  - ◆ Talking to God; and
  - ◆ Interceding for the righteous ...
  - ◆ This is not entirely wrong
- \* But I think it misses the main point, which is ...

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## God's Ear .. Continued

- \* Abraham's relationship with God has progressed to the point where God allows him to "probe His mind"
  - ◆ He probes with a series of questions that appeal to God's character — or attributes
- \* What attributes does Abraham appeal to?
  - ◆ God's justice ... specifically his "remunerative justice" - Will you punish the just because of the unjust? - vv. 23-25
  - ◆ God's longsuffering (voluntarily delaying judgment in spite of continual disobedience)... For how many righteous will you delay your judgment? - vv. 27ff

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## God's Ear .. Continued

- \* What attributes does he NOT appeal to?
  - ◆ God's Grace or Mercy
  - ◆ These were surely on his mind, BUT ...
  - ◆ He primarily wants to know how God's justice works
- \* The narrative proceeds with Abraham's persistent appeals .. each time "upping the ante" by "lowering the number"

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## God's Ear .. Continued

- \* Abraham is not haggling with God ... nor is he primarily concerned with, or for, Lot
- \* Rather, he is probing God and appealing to the very thing he was commanded to keep in v. 19 (righteousness & justice)
  - ◆ Abraham wants to learn how to "judge rightly!" - Who does that sound like?
    - King Solomon — 1 Kings 3:5ff
- \* Abraham may have started the conversation, but God chooses when to close it .. He departs in v. 33

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## Genesis 19

A MONUMENT TO GOD'S JUSTICE

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## Introductory Thoughts

- \* An obvious “sequel” to Gen 18:16ff
- \* We see first God’s inspection ... according to His stated purpose in 18:21
- \* Followed by His justice and the aftermath
- \* The narrative has four distinct acts ...
  - ◆ Act 1 (vv. 1-11) pictures [debauchery](#)
  - ◆ Act 2 (vv. 12-22) pictures [deliverance](#)

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## Introductory Thoughts

- ◆ Act 3 (vv. 23-29) pictures [destruction](#)
- ◆ Act 4 (vv. 30-38) pictures [disgrace](#)
- \* **What is the main point of Chapter 19?**
  - ◆ Primarily: To demonstrate God’s response to unrepentant & persistent sin
  - ◆ Secondarily: To demonstrate how God preserves the righteous who are among the unrighteous

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## Introductory Thoughts

- \* **What attribute of God do we learn about?**
  - ◆ His JUSTICE — sometimes call His RIGHTEOUSNESS
    - ▶ Both His retributive and His remunerative justice
- \* **How is God’s remunerative justice displayed?**
  - ◆ He rescues “imperfect” Lot ... reminding us that God may reveal his “mind,” while withholding his “methods”
  - ◆ He did “spare” the righteous, just not the way Abraham had envisioned it in his questions (i.e. sparing the city)

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# Debauchery

- \* As with 18:1 we are given the identity of the men who come to Sodom in v. 1 ... Angels
- \* What is interesting about where the Angels find Lot?
  - ◆ Sitting in the gate
- \* Why is this significant?
  - ◆ Lot has gone from pitching his tent "[near](#)" Sodom - 13:12
  - ◆ To living "[in](#)" Sodom - 14:12
  - ◆ To being "[among](#)" the leaders of Sodom - 19:1
- 📌 Reminding us that "sinful living is ALLURING & NUMBING"

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# Debauchery .. Continued

- \* Lot offers a similar, but less enthusiastic, greeting to the travelers in vv. 2-3
  - ◆ He extends lodging and refreshment
  - ◆ Interesting there is no mention of Lot's wife
- \* What is notable about v. 4?
  - ◆ The "total depravity" of Sodom
  - ◆ "Young and old" ... "from the entire city"

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# Debauchery .. Continued

- \* The men make their intentions know in v. 5
- \* Why are vv. 4-5 important?
  - ◆ Because they confirm the fact ... the evidence ... of the outcry that came to God (cf. 18:21)
- \* In vv. 6-8, Lot intercedes for his guests
- \* What would you say about Lot's intercession?
  - ◆ Starts well — vv. 6-7
  - ◆ Dubious solution — v. 8

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## Debauchery .. Continued

- \* What implications might you draw from Lot's proposed solution?
  - ◆ Avoiding sin with sin is NEVER the right answer
  - ◆ Do not be cavalier about those who God entrusts to us
- \* What does v. 9 tell us about Lot?
  - ◆ He would seem to have some redeeming qualities
  - ◆ There was clearly built up animosity toward Lot .. suggesting prior attempts to curb their sinfulness

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## Debauchery .. Continued

- \* In vv. 10-11, Lot .. the man of "9-lives" ... is rescued again
- \* What does v. 11 tell us about Lot's guests?
  - ◆ They are more than mere men
- \* So we leave vv. 1-11 with no question about the character of Sodom and its inhabitants, and ...
- 📖 It should be a shrill reminder that we cannot live in close proximity of sin and NOT BE tainted by it

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## Deliverance

- \* Verses 12-22 comprise Act 2 — Lot's deliverance
- \* Act 2 has three distinct scenes ...
  - ◆ Scene 1 (vv. 12-14) — God divulges his plans to Lot
  - ◆ Scene 2 (vv. 15-16) — Lot dallies in response
  - ◆ Scene 3 (vv. 17-22) — Lot dickers for more
- \* God's plan has two objectives .. What are they?
  - ◆ Rescue the righteous; Destroy the unrighteous
- \* What "bigger picture plan does that bring to mind??"
  - ◆ God's plan for redemption!

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* Verse 13 reveals the reason for God's action
- \* What do we learn about God from vv. 12-13?
  - ◆ He does not act capriciously
  - ◆ He gives us ample warning before He acts
  - ◆ He wants us to know how He will accomplish His purposes
  - ◆ He wants us to understand why He does what He does
- \* N.B. Lot changes the "we" of v. 13 to "the LORD" in v. 14 — recognizing God's hand behind the angels

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* There is a profound principle in v. 14 .. what is it?
  - ◆ When you look like the world you lose your testimony
- \* One commentator said it this way ...
  - ◆ "If you want to reach the lost, you have to be different ... not the same, DIFFERENT"
- 🗨️ Think about this quote in the context of what we see in the church today

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* Scene 2: Lot Dallies (vv. 15-16)
  - ◆ Verse 15 is quite emphatic with urgency .. 2 imperatives — "Up, take"
  - ◆ ... And a reason — "lest you be swept away"
    - Same Hebrew verb used in Abraham's appeal .. cf. 18:23
- \* Why do you think the writer makes this connection?
  - ◆ To make it clear that Lot's deliverance is in response to Abraham's appeal

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* How does Lot respond to the Angels command?
  - ◆ He dilly dallies ...
- \* What does this tell us about Lot?
  - ◆ He is a double-minded man trying to grab the best of two worlds
- \* What do Jesus and James say about this kind of man?
  - ◆ Can't serve 2 masters - Matt 6:24
  - ◆ He is unstable in all his ways - Jas 1:8

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* What is the proper corrective for this kind of response?
  - ◆ Seek first the Kingdom ... Matt 6:33
- \* What is the source of God's actions in v. 16?
  - ◆ His compassion .. or mercy
  - ◆ Even though Abraham appealed to God's justice — it works itself out through God's mercy

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* Scene 3: Lot Dickers (vv. 17-22)
  - ◆ Verse 17 is a second strong command
    - ▶ The urging: Escape
    - ▶ The instructions: Don't look back; Don't stop
    - ▶ The destination: To the hills
    - ▶ The reason: Lest you be swept away ...
  - ◆ What might the destination suggest to us?
    - ▶ He's being directed back to Abraham ..

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* But Lot's no "prodigal" ...
- \* Instead of humility he exhibits selfish arrogance
- \* Verses 18-20 are classic "high context" communication ..
  - ◆ In the West we use "low context" communication ... meaning we are very direct. What you say is generally what you mean

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- ◆ In the East they use "high context" communication ... meaning it is very indirect. What you say must be interpreted!!
- ◆ Lot is not making a genuine appeal for his physical inability
- ◆ He is dickering for a different alternative
- \* Verse 18 starts with an exclamation ... "Oh no, not this!" is the essence
  - ◆ I'm thinking ... How about a simple thank you and some gratitude for nudging me out of my "dallying stupor" in the face of grave danger

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- ◆ Nope — Not Lot .. He's looking for a better deal
- \* Verse 19 starts the process
  - ◆ He recognizes he is the beneficiary of **grace and kindness**
  - ◆ But ... then the "BUT"
- \* **Do you really think Lot's reason is genuine?**
  - ◆ I don't ... but it is ironically prophetic!
  - ◆ Evil will eventually overtake him in the hills

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* Verse 20 supplies the alternative ...
  - ◆ How about this small city close by God?
  - ◆ After all, it is a small one — surely you can spare that city God!
  - ◆ Lot seems to have no conscience about testing God's patience, and ...
  - ◆ He still seems to be having trouble "letting go"

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* Remarkably, Lot's request is granted - v. 21
- \* The city is named Zoar
  - ◆ The Hebrew root means "little" or "insignificant"
  - ◆ Note that Zoar was part of the rebellious kings (Gen 14:2) .. thus likely was part of God's original destruction plans
  - ◆ Yet for the sake of Lot ... and to honor His promise to Abraham ... God spares Zoar

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## Deliverance .. Continued

- \* What is interesting about v. 22?
  - ◆ Hints at the idea of preservation or assurance
  - ◆ The Angels hands are tied until Lot is in the clear
  - ◆ As Jesus says repeatedly in the NT ..
  - ◆ He will protect all those whom the Father has given to Him - John 18:9
  - ◆ Lot, despite his shortcomings is preserved by God

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## Destruction

- \* Act 3: God's Destruction (vv. 23-29)
  - ◆ Verses 23-26 picture God's **retributive justice** — His punishment for disobedience
  - ◆ It plays out on two levels ...
    - ▶ Corporately on the cities, the inhabitants, and the land
      - ◆ The coveted fields of Lot are now one vast wasteland
    - ▶ Individually on one of the "supposed" righteous
      - ◆ Lot's wife lived and died where her heart was - God sees the heart

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## Destruction .. Continued

- ◆ Abraham arises early the next day to see God's verdict
- ◆ And observes the totality of God's judgment on Sodom
- \* **What is notable about Abraham's response?**
  - ◆ His solemn reflection — He says not a word
  - ◆ Maybe he was thinking along with the writer of Hebrews in 10:31 .. "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God"

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## Destruction .. Continued

- \* **Why no outrage from Abraham?**
  - ◆ My speculation: He rested peacefully in His trust in the LORD and His will being done
  - ◆ He'd done his part — God did His part
- \* **How does Act 3 end?**
  - ◆ With reaffirmation of God's righteousness & justice
  - ◆ He protected the righteous ... just not in the manner that Abraham had requested

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## Disgrace

- \* Act 4: Lot's Disgrace (vv. 30-38)
- \* This final act is dripping with irony
  - ◆ First, the city he wanted becomes the city he fears
  - ◆ Second, the place Lot first rejected as the source of his safety becomes his Waterloo
  - ◆ Third, he perpetrated the very solution he proposed to the towns people - he slept with his daughters
  - ◆ Fourth, despite his righteousness - his legacy is one of weak faith

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## Disgrace .. Continued

- ◆ Fifth, his progeny became a thorn in Israel's side .. just as Lot was a thorn in Abraham's side
- ◆ Sixth, the man of plenty ends his recorded time in the Bible living in a cave
- ◆ Seventh, an account that starts with the epitome of faith (Abraham) ends in an apostasy of faith (Lot's daughters)
- ◆ Last, despite God's faith in delivering them, they lack faith in His ongoing provision

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## Disgrace .. Continued

- \* About the only thing that rings redemptive about this final act is the honesty in the children's names
  - ◆ Moab — "From father"
    - ▶ From whom the Moabite nation descends (Deut 2:9)
  - ◆ Ben-ammi — "Son of my people"
    - ▶ From whom the Ammonite nation descends (Deut 2:19)

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## Closing Reflections

- \* First on the nature of God's justice
- \* Second on the the contrasting natures of Abraham and Lot
- \* Third on S&G as a perpetual monument to God's justice

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## Principles of God's Justice

- \* What implications might we draw about the character of God's justice .. I can think of 6?
  - ◆ It is Fair
  - ◆ It is Certain
  - ◆ It is Complete
  - ◆ It is Sudden (i.e. without warning)
  - ◆ It is Swift
  - ◆ It is Final

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## Abraham vs. Lot

ABRAHAM	LOT
FRIEND OF GOD	FRIEND OF THE WORLD
SOUGHT GOD'S WILL	PURSUED HIS WILL
QUICK TO OBEY	QUICK TO NEGOTIATE
RAN TO GOD	RAN FROM GOD
GREW FROM TRIALS	GREW FROM GREED
LOOKED TO A BETTER FUTURE	LOOKED TO A BETTER NOW

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## Biblical References to S&G

CONTEXT	SCRIPTURES
As a reference to God's anger & wrath meted out against people's disobedience	Deut 29:25; Amos 4:11; 2 Pet 2:6
As a reference to people's, or nations, depravity in forsaking the LORD	Deut 32:32; Jer 23:14; Matt 10:35
As a picture of total judgment & destruction	Isa 1:9,10; 13:19; Jer 49:18; 50:40; Zeph 2:9; Rom 9:29; Jude 7

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