

Enough Rope?

Genesis 18: 1 – 19: 38

The three visitors (Genesis 18: 1 – 15)

- Three ‘men’ came to visit Abraham. Who were they, and what was the purpose of their visit? Do you think Abraham knew, at first, who they were? See Hebrews 13 v 2. Why did he entertain them so lavishly?

Abraham pleads for Sodom (Genesis 18: 16 - 33)

- What was characteristic about Abraham’s intercession for the people of Sodom? To which of God’s qualities did he appeal? We believe that God answers prayer - yes? So how did God answer Abraham’s prayer for the people of Sodom? See Genesis 19 v 29.

Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed (Genesis 19: 1 - 38)

For the main part of this study let’s focus on Lot. In Genesis 13 Lot “chose for himself” the Jordan plain, which was “well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt”. Then “Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom”. By Genesis 14 Lot was living in Sodom and had to be rescued by Abraham when the four invading kings carried him and his family away. Now in Genesis 19 v 1 Lot “was sitting in the gateway of the city”, meaning that he occupied an important position in civil administration – he was perhaps the Chief Magistrate, or even the Lord Mayor. Bear in mind that Lot was a righteous man, who was “greatly distressed by the lawless deeds of the wicked” (2 Peter 2 v 7, 8). But he wanted the best of both worlds... Imagine you are Lot, twenty years down the track, and you are being interviewed by the Old Testament equivalent of Andrew Denton... How would you answer these questions?

1. *Mr Lot, you tried to make a success of your life. You became the Mayor of Sodom. You entered the city as an unknown, a foreigner, and you achieved both wealth and honour. My first question is this: How did your choosing to live in Sodom affect your own inner life? What effect did Sodom have on your spiritual life?*
2. *My second question is: How much did you influence the city for good? How effective was your life in changing the city’s evils? When you moved into Sodom you intended to influence the city, and you did: you became Mayor. Now, in that place of great political influence, how many people did you succeed in turning from evil to righteousness?*
3. *My third question is: How much money did you make in Sodom? What do you have to show for all the years you spent there?*
4. *And fourthly: I know this is a hard question, but what influence did the city’s life have on your own family? We all remember the tragic story of what happened to your wife. But when you turned your back on living in tents and went to live in Sodom, what happened to your two daughters?*

This tragic story of Lot is taking place right here and now, in the modern Sodom and Gomorrah in which we live. Remember, it does not have to be so. Up in the hills is Abraham, whose whole life principle was to let God choose, and to be satisfied with that choice, though it meant living in a tent all his days. His first question was never: “How much money will I make?” but “Will it destroy my tent and my altar? These things are precious and I want nothing that destroys my sense of pilgrimage, and my fellowship with God.” In the end, Abraham gained the whole land and all that Lot possessed, and more besides, and his children will inherit the earth, according to the Scriptures, “for he looked for a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11 v 10).

Let Jesus have the last word: “Remember Lot’s wife. Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it” (Luke 17 v 32, 33).