



11

Sodom and Gomorrah

Key Themes

- God judges sin.
- God is merciful toward sinners.

Key Passages

- Genesis 18:22–33, 19:15–17, 19:23–26

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize that God's justice demands a punishment for sin.
- Describe God's mercy to Lot and to us.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Children will unscramble the words from the memory verse on the Acts 17:26–27 Word Scramble activity sheet and then color the picture on the sheet.



Activity 1: Read the Word

page 5

Children will use the Read the Word worksheet to follow along with the Scripture reading and to answer questions about the Bible passage.



Studying God's Word

page 6

The Lord and two angels appeared to Abraham and announced the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah because of the sin and wickedness God saw there. Abraham pleaded not only for the cities but for his nephew Lot. God must punish sin, but He had mercy on Lot and his family.



Activity 2: Get Out of Sodom

page 10

Children will play a variation of tug-of-war as they work to “pull” Lot out of Sodom. Or they may act out the scene where the angels come in and pull Lot's family from Sodom.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print one Word Scramble activity sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Word Scramble activity sheet for each student
- Pencils and crayons



READ THE WORD

- Print one Read the Word worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Read the Word worksheet for each student
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



GET OUT OF SODOM

- No preparation is necessary.

- A length of strong rope
- Heavy furniture to pull



Memory Verse

Acts 17:26–27 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

To prepare your heart and mind for this week's lesson, read Genesis 18:1–2, 18:16–33, 19:1–29; Luke 17:28–30.

The journey of Abram to Canaan is one wrought with detours and adventure. The Lord told Abram to leave the land of his family and settle in a land the Lord would show him. Abram was to be the head of a great nation, a blessing to many, and his name would be great (Genesis 12:1–3). Abram listened and obeyed and left the land of Ur. God tells us that Lot, Abram's nephew, was part of the company of travelers from the beginning of the journey. After settling first in Haran (Genesis 11:31) they proceeded at the Lord's call to Canaan. Then there was another detour to Egypt because of a famine (Genesis 12:10). Through all of their wanderings, the Lord continued to increase their livestock and the land they traversed was no longer efficient to support Abram, Lot, and all of their possessions (Genesis 13:5–7). This is when uncle and nephew parted ways. Abram to the land of Canaan and Lot to the cities of the plain—where sin and wickedness prevailed against the Lord (Genesis 13:12–13).

God's justice demands punishment for sin and wickedness, and He was soon to providentially bring an end to the sin that permeated Sodom and Gomorrah. In a meeting between Abraham, the Angel of the Lord (Jesus), and two angels, the Lord confirmed that Abraham and Sarah would bear a son (Genesis 18:14). He also revealed the plan to destroy the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20–21).

Abraham pleaded with the Lord to spare the city. However, God must punish sin; His justice demands that He punish those who turn from Him in wickedness. And there were fewer than ten righteous in the city (Genesis 18:32). This account illustrates just how wicked men can be. Lot, too, had succumbed to the evil influence of the city as demonstrated when he offered his own daughters to the men of the city to satisfy their lusts and protect the angels (Genesis 19:6–8).

But God is also merciful. And His mercy was shown to Lot and his daughters. In spite of their own sinfulness, they were spared from the destruction of the city (Genesis 19:16).

This account is tragic. The sin of man is great and God's judgment is to be feared—and not taken lightly. Lot's wife did not learn that lesson. And it was only moments after she was mercifully spared death in the city that she again blatantly disobeyed God during

the escape—when she looked back at the destruction behind her (Genesis 19:17). For this she was judged and turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26).

The terrible destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is an event referred to throughout Scripture to demonstrate the severity of God's judgment: Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 1:9, 13:19; Jeremiah 50:40; Lamentations 4:6; Amos 4:11; Zephaniah 2:9; Matthew 10:15; Mark 6:11; Luke 17:28–29; Romans 9:29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 1:7.

And yet God also revealed His mercy—by sparing Lot and his daughters. This is the mercy He provides to all sinners who in faith and repentance accept His forgiveness and turn to Jesus Christ.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

There are many who cannot believe that this account could possibly be true. What can we say to those blinded to the truth? First of all, the fact that this event is referenced so many times throughout Scripture (see above for list) verifies that there was never any doubt by these writers that this event occurred just as it was recorded.

We know that those who do not rely on the authority of God's Word resort to relying on man's "evidence." And there was no historical or archaeological evidence to corroborate the biblical account—until recently.

It is clear from various biblical passages that Sodom and Gomorrah should be located in the Dead Sea region. When Abraham and his nephew Lot parted ways (Genesis 13:8–13), Lot chose to settle in the Jordan valley "in the direction of Zoar" and moved his tents to "the cities of the plain" as far as Sodom. According to Genesis 14, the cities of the plain, which include Sodom, Gomorrah, Zoar, Zeboiim, and Admah, joined forces to battle a coalition of Mesopotamian kings in the "Valley of Siddim" (Genesis 14:8)—that is, the Salt Sea. This is referring to the Dead Sea region.

Between 1973 and 1979 two archaeologists surveyed an area southeast of the Dead Sea and located the remains of five cities. From North to South the cities are Bab Edh-Dhra (first discovered in 1924), Numeira, Safi, Feifa, and Khanazir. Could these be the five "cities of the plain" identified in Genesis?

The most remarkable feature of Bab Edh-Dhra is the number of graves. An estimated 20,000 tombs are located on the site. These family tombs held approximately half a million people with over 3 million pottery vessels. This was clearly a well-populated area in the past, and may well be the ancient city of Sodom.

The excavation of the city of Numeira exposed that

this entire area was covered by the ashy debris of its final destruction, up to 16 inches in depth. This, coupled with the fact that the Arabic name for this city has similar consonants as the Hebrew name for Gomorrah, led biblical archaeologists to conclude that this could be the city of Gomorrah.

“Proof” is not necessary to verify God’s Word. In fact, what more do we need than the very word of the one who ordained and accomplished this historical account. However, God allows for these confirmations so that we will be better equipped to defend our faith and the Bible against the skeptics who attempt to dishonor and discredit it.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The biblical narratives of this time period in terms of customs, laws, legal agreements, and family arrangements fit well with what we know from historical records left by other societies of the Middle East, such as the Amorites, Sumerians, and Akkadians.

During this particular period in history in the Middle East, the role of the patriarch in family life was very important. Family structure included three levels: tribe, family, and household (Joshua 7:14). The fundamental societal unit of the household included a patriarch, his wife, his sons and their wives, his grandchildren, and other dependents. These households often lived in a compound, with houses around a central courtyard, encircled by a low wall.

Abraham, as patriarch of his household, was responsible for the economic support, religious well-being, and safety of his entire household (Genesis 14:13–16). In Genesis 18 we see Abraham, as the

patriarch, fulfilling his hospitality obligations to protect and care for sojourners or aliens, too (Leviticus 19:33–34). Hospitality was one of the most highly regarded virtues of the ancient world, and still is in many societies of the Middle East. Abraham showed his guests great honor by preparing them a meal.

Again, as we compare the history book of the universe with secular historical accounts, we gain confirmation and confidence that God’s Word is true.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Lord, you are truly a God to be feared. You must punish all sin and your punishment is serious as demonstrated in this account of Sodom and Gomorrah. I marvel at your patience with the world today. You are mocked, ignored, cursed, and blasphemed by so many—yet you wait patiently. And you continue to offer a way for sinners to be reconciled to you. Help my students to see the gravity of their own sinfulness against you. And give me wisdom, Lord, to clearly explain the mercy and forgiveness you offer through Jesus Christ. Open their eyes to see that you alone can offer forgiveness—and you have done that through Jesus Christ.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will unscramble words from the memory verse on the Word Scramble activity sheet.
- They will color the picture on the sheet.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme posters from previous weeks, quickly review the previous lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you review the Lesson Theme posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Read the Word

MATERIALS

- Read the Word worksheet for each student
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out the worksheets and pencils before you teach the following section. As you teach and observe the text, have the students complete the worksheets by circling the answers and filling in the blanks.

I want you to use these worksheets today to follow along with me as I read the Scripture for today's lesson. You will also use them to

help you answer questions later as we study God's Word.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Asking questions about God's Word after we read it is a great way to help us to understand what He is saying to us. We call that observing the text, or looking at it closer by answering questions about it. Today, we will be reading the Scripture on your worksheet. I will be asking questions, and I want you to find the answers and mark them on your worksheets. *Refer to the Bible Study poster.*



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Before we get started reading, you will need a little background. First of all, when Abraham left his hometown of Ur, he took his family and all of his possessions with him. His nephew Lot was with him. Now, there came a time when Abraham and Lot had to part ways. Lot chose to live in the comfortable cities of the east while Abraham remained in Canaan in the countryside.

Abraham and Sarah had some very special visitors one day. The Lord came to see them, and He brought two angels with Him! The angels and the Lord appeared to Abraham as men. The Lord had come to judge the cities and destroy them because of their disobedience to Him. He had seen that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked and sinful.

Abraham begged God for His mercy. He wanted God to spare the cities and not destroy them. Abraham's nephew, Lot lived in the cities God was going to destroy.

Genesis 18:22-33

I am going to read Genesis 18:22-33. It is on your worksheets. I want you to follow along as I read.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.

Observe the Text

- ? Who are the characters in these verses? Look in verse 22. *The Lord and Abraham.* Have the children circle those words on the worksheet.

Abraham wanted to save the cities. He thought if there were any righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord should save them.

- ? What was the first number that Abraham gave to the Lord? You will find it in verse 24. *Fifty righteous.* Have the children circle "fifty righteous" on their worksheet.

That's right. Abraham thought surely the Lord would save the cities if there were 50 good people. And the Lord said yes.

- ? But Abraham thought he better go lower. What was the next number he gave to the Lord? That is in verse 28. *Forty-Five.* Have the children circle "forty-five" on their worksheet.

That's right. And the Lord said He would spare the cities for 45 righteous people.

Who are the characters in these verses?



? Then what did Abraham ask? Look in verse 29. How many? *Forty. Have the children circle "forty" on their worksheet.*

Abraham kept lowering his number, didn't he? And the Lord agreed—if there were 40 righteous people, He would spare them.

? And what did Abraham ask next in verse 30? *What about thirty? Have the children circle "thirty" on their worksheet.*

? And then—after 30? What did Abraham ask in verse 31? *What if twenty righteous could be found? Have the children circle "twenty" on their worksheet.*

? And then—after 20? See verse 32. *Suppose ten should be found there? Have the children circle ten on their worksheet.*

Discover the Truth

Well, that is pretty interesting. Abraham started with the number 50, and before the Lord even left him he was down to 10. Abraham asked, "What if 10 people are righteous in the city, will you spare it?" Abraham's nephew Lot and his family lived in Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham wanted the Lord to spare the cities and spare his nephew.

However, I don't think that Abraham or the Lord thought there would be very many righteous or good people in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. That is why Abraham kept lowering the number. He really knew how wicked the cities were and he didn't want everyone to be destroyed.

And the Lord knew the same thing. The Lord knew about their sin, and He had come to destroy them. There comes a time when the Lord must judge sin. He is very patient and gives us time to repent of our sins. But He will judge those who continue to ignore Him.

Remember, when Adam and Eve sinned God judged them by sending them out of the garden. When the people of Noah's day continued to sin, God flooded the earth, and everyone but Noah and his family died in the Flood. And when the people at Babel sinned, God confused their language and scattered them all over the earth. *Refer to the Seven C's Timeline to review these judgments from the Lord.*

So let's see what happens now—with Sodom and Gomorrah!



READ THE WORD

I am going to read some of Genesis 19. The verses I am going to read are on page two of your worksheets.

Chapter 19 tells us that the two angels who visited Abraham with the Lord went into Sodom and Gomorrah. They were disguised as men. Abraham's nephew Lot met them, and he urged the angels to stay with

him. Remember, the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were very great. And the angels told Lot and his family that they must run from the city because God was going to judge it and all the wicked people who lived there.

Listen carefully now as I read. Follow along on your worksheet.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Now let's ask some questions and see if we can tell what God's Word is saying to us.

Observe the Text

? What did the angels tell Lot to do? It is in verse 15. *Hurry, take your daughters and go. Have the children circle those answers on the worksheets.*

? What do you think the word "consumed" means? It is in verse 15. The angels said go or you will be consumed in the punishment. *Allow for answers.*

Consumed means destroyed—the angels were telling Lot to hurry so he and his daughters wouldn't be destroyed by the punishment God was bringing. *Have children circle the word "consumed" and write "destroyed" on the line next to the word.*

? What did the angels do to Lot and his family next? It is in verse 16. *Took their hands and brought them out of the city.*

? Whose hands did they grab? It is still in verse 16. *Lot's hand, his wife's hand, and his daughters' hands. Have the children circle the answers on the worksheet.*

? What was the Lord being to Lot and his family? It is in verse 16. It says the Lord was being . . . what? *Merciful. Have the children circle the word on their worksheet.*

? Now, what does that mean—merciful? Take a look at the Attributes of God poster if you don't know. *Kind to those in misery, distress, or suffering.*

? What did the angel say once he got Lot and his family out of the city? It is in verse 17. *Escape for your life. Have children circle the answer on the worksheet.*

? He gave them two more orders in the same verse. What were they? *Do not look behind you; escape to the mountains. Have the children circle those answers on the worksheet.*

? Very good. So what time of day was this? You will want to look in Genesis 19:23 now. *Morning—the sun had risen. Have the children circle the answer on the worksheet.*

? How did the Lord destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Look in Genesis 19:24. *With brimstone and fire.*

? Who knows what brimstone is? *Allow for answers.*

Brimstone is like a rock that catches on fire really easily. So when the Lord sent the fire and the brimstone down from the sky, He meant business.

? What does verse 25 tell us about what was destroyed? *The plain, the inhabitants, and what grew on the ground. Have the children circle the answers on the worksheet.*



Consumed:
destroyed

MERCIFUL

(Refer to Attributes poster)

Brimstone: a
type of rock
that catches on
fire easily

? What do you think “inhabitants” means? *Allow for answers.*

Inhabitants means all the people who were still living in those cities. They were all destroyed by the fire and the brimstone. *Have the children write the word “people” on the blank line in verse 25.*

Inhabitants:
people

? Look at the very end of our verses. In verse 26 what did Lot’s wife do? *She looked back. Have the children circle the answer on the worksheet.*

? And what happened to her? *She became a pillar of salt. Have the children circle the answer on the worksheet.*

? Now why would God do that to her? Look in Genesis 19:17 and see if you can tell me. *The angels had told them to not look back, and she disobeyed.*

That’s right. The Angels had said do not look back. Lot’s wife did not obey. And for that, she was destroyed—turned into a pillar of salt.

Discover the Truth

? Who remembers why God had to judge Sodom and Gomorrah this way? *Because of their sin. The people were wicked.*

That is right. Sodom and Gomorrah—and three other cities in the plain—were destroyed by fire and brimstone, burned up completely. And everyone who lived there was destroyed with the city. And then Lot’s wife turned to a pillar of salt because she disobeyed God and looked back. She did exactly what the angels had said not to do.

God is holy. Because He is holy He must punish sin. And although God is also patient when it comes to our sin, He will finally have to judge us. That is what He did to Sodom and Gomorrah. God showed us a lot about Himself in this account, and I think we should take a look at the Attributes of God poster.

? What do I mean when I say God is holy? *He cannot sin and hates all sin.*

? What do I mean when I say God is just? *He is fair according to who He is; He must punish sin.*

? What do I mean when I say God is omnipotent? *He is all powerful to do whatever He wants.*

That’s right. We can see all of these attributes in what we just studied about Sodom and Gomorrah. God is holy—He hates sin. God is just—He must punish sin. God is omnipotent—He is powerful to do whatever He wants. And God did just that. Because He hated the sins of the people living in Sodom and Gomorrah, He punished them. He showed His amazing power by sending fire and brimstone from the sky to destroy the cities completely!



HOLY
JUST
OMNIPOTENT
(Refer to Attributes poster)



Get Out of Sodom

MATERIALS

- A length of strong rope
- Heavy furniture to pull

INSTRUCTIONS

Tie the rope to something heavy in the room (e.g., a desk or heavy chair) or bring something heavy from home. Label it "Lot." The children will act as the angels who have come to save Lot from being destroyed. Have two children pull the first time. If they can't move the object, add more children until they can.

Option 1: You may want to divide the children into two teams and have a tug of war. Place a sign saying "Sodom" on one side of the room and one saying "Escape" on the other side. You can join the "Escape" team to help them win.

Option 2: Pick four children to be Lot and his family in Sodom. Pick two children to be the angels. Have the children act out the scene. The angels are going to warn the family, and grab their hands, pulling them out of the city and away from the danger of God's fiery punishment.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

? What attribute was God showing Lot when He sent the angels to Sodom to save him from the punishment that was coming?

Allow answers. Mercy.

Although God had to judge the sin of Sodom, He was still able to show mercy to Lot. He was showing kindness to him—Lot was in distress and would soon die unless he left the city.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

We learned a lot about God in this account. One of the important truths is that God has to judge sin; He can't just let it go. And He has shown His judgment in the past. He judged Adam and Eve for their sin. He judged them by sending them out of the garden. He judged the people of Noah's day when He flooded the earth, and everyone but Noah and his family died. And when the people at Babel sinned, God confused their language and scattered them all over the earth.

In this account He showed us His justice against sin again. Sodom and Gomorrah were cities full of sin and disobedience against God. And God judged their sin.

But remember, God also showed His mercy. He sent His angels to the city to warn Abraham's nephew Lot. And not only did the angels warn them; they even took them by the hands and brought them safely out of the city.

God has also offered us His mercy. We deserve God’s punishment because we are sinners like Adam and Eve, the people of Noah’s day, the people who disobeyed God at the Tower of Babel, and the people in Sodom and Gomorrah. God does not look lightly on sin—He is patient, and He will allow us a long time to seek His forgiveness, but eventually He must judge our sin.

And that is where His mercy to us comes in. Jesus came to earth—Jesus is God—and He never sinned; He lived a perfect life. He was killed on the Cross even though He had done nothing wrong. And He did that so we would have a way to be forgiven. Jesus said that whoever would believe in Him, believe that He lived, died, and rose from the grave, would be saved from God’s judgment. He took the punishment for the sins of all who would turn away from their sins and put their trust in Jesus. That is the most amazing example of God’s mercy ever.

GOD’S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

You may hear people say that this whole biblical account of Sodom and Gomorrah is not true because there is no way fire and brimstone could come down from heaven and destroy cities.

But those people just don’t believe the Bible is true. Everything in the Bible is true. Some people want to take the parts they don’t like out of the Bible. But we aren’t allowed to do that. We have to believe all of it or none of it. We can’t just believe the parts we like and then take out the parts we don’t like. God says that all of His Word is true—and all means all!

So we need to be confident in God’s Word and not listen to people who make up stories about it. It is true—and you can trust it.



► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Acts 17:26–27 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Pray that the children will understand that their sin is serious and deserves God’s punishment.
- Thank God for His mercy to all who believe in Jesus Christ.

