

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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Lesson 8: Living Righteously in a Wicked World, Genesis 13–14; 18–19

Introduction



We are surrounded by unrighteous influences. This lesson is about the importance of being righteous even when wickedness is all around us.

Abraham and his family settle in Hebron, and Lot and his family settle near Sodom. (Genesis 13.)

Background on Abraham's Travels

Abraham was raised in Ur of Chaldea before being led by the Lord to settle in Haran. The Lord later led him from Haran to the land of Canaan (present day Palestine between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea) and promised, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Genesis 12:7). Because of a famine in Canaan, Abraham and his family went to Egypt (Genesis 12:10). Genesis 13 begins with Abraham and his family returning to Canaan from Egypt.

Genesis 13: 5-9.

Prosperity—abundant flocks and herds—made it difficult for Lot and Abraham to live in the same area, so Abraham gave Lot the choice when it was decided that they must separate to avoid conflict between their herdsmen or themselves over the land. Here, we have an example of how to resolve conflicts with family members or others.

Genesis 13:10-13 tell us that Lot chose to settle in the cities on the plain and pitched his tent toward Sodom, even though the

people of Sodom were exceedingly wicked. He seems to have chosen the spot because it was like a well-watered garden. Later, Lot chose to move into the city of Sodom. Just as Lot decided to locate himself in an evil environment, we too may choose to associate ourselves with evil rather than shunning it. We may begin by becoming guilty of small sins without realizing or acknowledging that this may lead to large, more grievous sins. Before that happens and we graduate to the larger sins, we need to change our behavior

Lesson Highlights

- Abraham and his family settle in Hebron, and Lot and his family settle near Sodom.
- Abraham rescues Lot, pays tithes to Melchizedek, and refuses to accept the spoils of war from the king of Sodom.
- The Lord destroys Sodom and Gomorrah.

A study of this lesson will help us resolve to hold fast to righteous standards during times of increasing wickedness.

Next Week

#9: "God Will Provide Himself a Lamb", Abraham 1; Genesis 15–17; 21–22

It is important that we keep ourselves free from sin, even when evil is all around us. We must strive to be a righteous influence in the world instead of letting worldly things influence us.



Lot Flees as Sodom and Gomorrah Burn
- Gustave Doré

“Be in the world.’ Be involved; be informed. Try to be understanding and tolerant and to appreciate diversity. Make meaningful contributions to society through service and involvement....’ Be not of the world.’ Do not follow wrong paths or bend to accommodate or accept what is not right. ...”
M. Russell Ballard, May 1989

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- How can you better follow Abraham’s example when resolving conflicts with family members or others?
- What do you pitch your tent toward?
- Thinking of Lot’s wife what does “looking back” represent? How might we sometimes “look back”?

and/or our environment to remove the temptations and the opportunity to choose evil over righteousness.

Like Lot, the people of King Benjamin in the Book of Mor-

mon also pitched their tents facing a specific direction. (See Mosiah 2:6.) However, they chose to pitch their tents in the direction of the Lord’s house—the temple.

As Latter-day Saints, we must assure that our homes are properly positioned toward holy rather than worldly places.

Abraham rescues Lot, pays tithes to Melchizedek, and refuses to accept the spoils of war from the king of Sodom.

• Genesis 18:16–33; 19:1–29.

Genesis 14:1–2, 8–9. While Lot lived in Sodom, the kings of several city-states, including Sodom and Gomorrah, began warring with one another.

Genesis 14:10–12. In Sodom, Lot was taken captive after all of his goods were taken during a successful invasion by the soldiers of the enemies of Sodom.

Genesis 14:13–16. When alerted to Lot’s kidnapping, Abraham took his 318 followers and pursued the enemy until he was able to overtake them, smite them, and drive them off into Jordan. Lot was rescued along with his goods.

Genesis 14:17–18. Welcomed by the kings after his victory, Abraham met and was blessed by Melchizedek, king of Salem and “the priest of the most high God”.

Genesis 14:20 (JST 14:36–40). It is recorded here that Abraham paid his tithing to Melchizedek.

Genesis 14:21–24. Rather than have it said that the king of Sodom had rewarded him, Abraham refused to take the recaptured goods that were offered to him for his service. He utterly refused to take anything—even a thread—from the wicked king. This is an example of extreme righteousness

that should cause us to think about our actions in our day. Do we accept a “thread” of immorality? A “thread” of dishonesty? Do we sometimes accept a certain amount of unrighteousness in our entertainment choices rather than forego the viewing of a movie or TV program? What is the level of compromise that we are willing to accept? Abraham was unwilling to compromise at all—not even a little. It tells us a great deal about Abraham when we see that he was anxious to pay tithes to Melchizedek, who represented the Lord, while he was absolutely opposed to accepting any riches from the unrighteous king of Sodom.

The Lord destroys Sodom and Gomorrah.

• Genesis 18:16–33; 19:1–29.

Genesis 18:20–21. Because of the iniquity of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord planned to destroy the cities.

Genesis 18:23–32. Abraham was concerned that some righteous people might be destroyed along with the wicked.

Abraham pleaded with the Lord to spare the cities for the sake of those people who were righteous. The Lord ultimately agreed that if at least ten righteous people could be found the cities would be spared.

Genesis 19: 12–13, 15 record that the “holy men” told Lot to leave Sodom because it was about to be destroyed.

Genesis 19:14 consider Lot’s sons-in-law rejected the warning and chose to stay

among the wicked even when a promise of imminent destruction is pronounced.

Genesis 19:17. Lot and his family were counseled not to look back as they fled to the mountain. The Savior has given similar counsel to his followers (Luke 9:62; 17:29–32; D&C 133:14–15).

He wanted his disciples to understand that “looking back” demonstrates either a reluctance to sacrifice that which is asked of us or a lack of complete commitment to following the Savior and his teachings. Consider how we might sometimes “look back”.

Genesis 19:26. Lot’s wife lagged behind Lot, turning back toward Sodom. She paid a high price for her disobedience.

To repent we must change our hearts and our behavior. To do this we must sometimes choose a new environment and new associates.

Genesis 19:29 indicates that Lot was spared because he was Abraham’s brother. We too can have a saving effect on those around us when we chose righteousness and obedience to the Lord.

President Spencer W. Kimball said: *“Our world is now much the same as it was in the days of the Nephite prophet who said: ‘... if it were not for the prayers of the righteous ... ye would even now be visited with utter destruction. ...’ (Al. 10:22.) Of course, there are many many upright and faithful who live all the commandments and whose lives and prayers keep the world from destruction”* (Ensign, June 1971, 16).