

God Can Save From His Own Judgement

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[0:00] Genesis 19, and we will start in verse 15 and read through 29. With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, Hurry, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.

When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and led them safely outside the city, for the Lord was merciful to them.

As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, Flee for your lives. Don't look back and don't stop anywhere in the plain. Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away.

But Lot said to them, No, my lords, please. Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains. This disaster will overtake me and I'll die.

Look, here's a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it. It is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared.

[1:13] He said to him, Very well, I will grant this request too. I will not overthrow the town you speak of, but flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it.

That is why the town is called Zoar. By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens.

Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities, and also the vegetation in the land. But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Early the next morning, Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the Lord. He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.

So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

[2:22] What are we to make of? Verse 24 there, Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens.

Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the city, and the vegetation in the land. Can you imagine such a horrific scene?

Two cities totally, actually four cities altogether, totally destroyed. With not a plant left, not an animal left, not a man or a boy or a girl left, and Abraham looks, and it's nothing but a smoking, burning fire, like out of a furnace.

What are we to make of that? Well, God wants you to know something about himself. God wants you to know something about himself.

That's why we have Genesis 19 in front of us. In Exodus 33, 13, Moses says to God, Show me your ways that I might know you. That's why so much of the Bible is a narrative, is a story, because God isn't just going to tell us his ways, he's going to show us his ways, so that we can know him.

[3:45] And so what is God showing us in Genesis 19? What does he want us to know about himself? We need to learn something from this, in some ways, very terrible passage.

Well, just this. That God can save from his judgment. God can save from his judgment.

Now, if you're taking notes, you can put that on the head of your page, that God can save from his own judgment. Now, that idea is broken down into two ideas.

God saves and God judges. Everything in this chapter hangs on that clothesline, and hangs between those two posts.

And so God is going to show you something tonight. He's going to stretch it out before you. And the thing you are to learn is that he can save you from his judgment.

[4:47] He wants you to know him. He wants you to know him better. That's why Genesis 19 is here. So are you ready? First, we see that God saves.

That's the first post. God saves. Now, as we begin in verse 15, the night is nearly over. The day is almost here. And with the coming of the dawn, the angels searching work, looking for who is righteous in the city, that searching work is over.

And there are not ten righteous men in the city. There's only one. And before God destroys the city of Sodom, he has to rescue this one righteous man.

He has to save this one. Now, isn't that good? Isn't that good? God knows his people down to the very last one. And he's going to save every single one of them.

And no matter how their situation, how weak or compromised they are, God knows how to rescue the righteous, every single one of them, including you, Christian.

[5:58] Now, so the angels say in verse 15, hurry, take your wife and your two daughters and get out or you will be swept away. But look at verse 16.

Look at how it starts. It's one of those very stunning verse. It begins, when he, that's Lot, when he hesitated. So how did Lot respond to the angels saying, hurry, get out, get out?

He hesitated. He lingered, the ESV says. God says, get out. And he didn't go. He didn't go right away.

And I think in this part of this passage, there is an idea that we are supposed to latch onto. And that is that God is merciful. Lot here is hesitating.

He's lingering, but God is merciful. And so when he hesitated, the men grasped his hands and the hands of his wife and his two daughters, and they led them safely out of the city.

[7:01] And God was merciful to them. Now, Matthew Henry called that holy, gracious violence. So the angels with gracious violence grabbed those four people and rushed them out of the city into safety.

And so when Lot doesn't have enough sense to save himself, God is merciful and he saves him. God is more willing to save us than we are to save ourselves.

And so sometimes we doubt God's heart. We're uncertain about it. But look at it here. God is merciful. And he will go to great lengths, gracious violence, in order to save his people.

Now, Lot and his family are outside of the city. And the angels say, run to the hills, run to the mountains, or you'll be swept away.

Don't stop anywhere on the plane. Don't look back. Now, kids, I have a question for you.

[8:12] I want you to think about something. And you all can think about it with them. If an angel told you to run, what would you do? If God told you to run to the mountains, what would you do?

I hope and I'm sure, I think you would run, wouldn't you? You would run. But look at Lot. The angels say, flee for your lives. And look at verse 18. No, my Lord, please.

No, my Lord, please. Be merciful. Keep being merciful. I can't run all the way to the mountains. Let me go to this small town instead. I can make it there. Why doesn't Lot just do what the angels say?

Why does he ask for, let me just go to this town and set the mountains. I'm not sure. I still don't know. I think it's supposed to show us what kind of person Lot is that he's hesitant.

He doesn't want to go all the way. When everything in him should be straining like a dog on the leash to run to safety, Lot is hesitant.

[9:18] But God is merciful. God is merciful. And Lot says, spare this little town. This little town of Zoar. And he says, okay, I'll grant that request to you.

But get there quickly because I can't do anything until you reach it. Now, God is so good, isn't he? We hesitate. We halter. We don't know what to do, but he's patient.

And not until we are safe and sound will judgment come. Not until the angels have gathered us all up will judgment come.

He knows how to rescue the godly from all their trials, including the biggest one of all, the one that happens at the very end, the judgment.

Now, in 2 Peter, Peter is writing and he's thinking about this chapter. He's thinking about this incident. And as he thinks, he says, he's thinking about what God did for Lot, and he writes, he rescued Lot, a righteous man.

[10:27] And if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from all of their trials. From trials. Now, isn't that a wonderful lesson to learn from this chapter?

God knows how to save the righteous from their trials. Now, brothers and sisters, I want you to think with me because you are all there now or you just were out of one or you're going to have one. You're going to have a trial, a difficulty. And it's important for us to think about what Genesis 19 is teaching us about God.

Think with me. If he can save you from hell, if he can save you from judgment, can't he save you from any trial that you face?

We're so quick to doubt God's heart. We're so quick to ask, to take our eyes off God and ask, can he save me from this?

[11:28] I'm not sure if he can protect me, if he's good enough, if he means well in this. We forget that he delivered us from the most awful fire.

And if he delivered us from the most awful fire, then surely he can deliver us from any small or fire that we face in our life. How silly unbelief is, isn't it?

How silly it is. We believe God can save us from sin, the very thing that's the opposite of him. And we believe that he can save us from hell.

But I'm not so sure if he can save me from the ridicule of my coworkers or their criticism. Or I don't know if he can save me from this financial crisis.

And we don't say those things out loud, but we say them in our hearts. But beloved, if he saved you from hell, can't he save you from any trial that you face?

[12:29] He knows how to save. He knows how to save the righteous. But God knows more than how to save the righteous. He knows how to save the unrighteous.

Because how does God find us? We sang it. We sang it. We were wandering away. We didn't love our Father's voice. He found us rebelling against him. He didn't find us righteous.

He found us unrighteous. And we weren't willing. We weren't straining like a dog on the leash to be saved. We were hesitant. We weren't sure. We were waiting.

We were waiting. But he's merciful. He finds us lingering and hesitant. And he saves us.

He saves us with gracious violence. Now kids, young people, we just ask the question, if an angel or if God told you to run to a mountain, what would you do?

[13:27] You would run, wouldn't you? But God is telling you to run to Jesus to be saved. He's telling you to run to Jesus.

And so, are you running? There's only one Savior. Are you running to him? See, narrow is the way that leads to life. There was only one city that was spared on that plane that day, that morning. And it was Zoar, and that means a small one. There was only a small city, a small place where salvation was found. And there's only one place where you can be saved from sin and the final judgment, from God's judgment.

It's a small place. It's Jesus. It's only one place. Narrow is the gate. There are few who find it. Jesus alone is the truth and the life.

There's no other way to the Father except through him. It's a small way. It's a small place. But I tell you, it's big enough to receive all who come to it.

[14:35] Everyone who comes to him finds room, finds salvation, finds protection from that last judgment. All who flee to him are saved. And so, I'm asking you, are you running?

Are you making it all the way there? Are you going all the way to Jesus? Not stopping anywhere, not stopping halfway, not stopping at 80-90%, but going all the way, giving yourself all the way to him.

Christ is willing to save you. And so, be saved then. God knows how to save. But before we move on to our next point, I want to ask, why did God save Lot?

Why did God save Lot? And why does He save anyone? Why is He so patient? Why is He so adamant and serious about going to such great lengths to save Lot?

Well, you see the answer in verse 29, the very last verse of the text that we had read. So, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, He remembered Abraham. And He brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

[15:41] So, why did God bring Lot out of this catastrophe, this horrific burning sulfur? God remembered Abraham. God remembered Abraham.

It was because of Abraham. Now, remember last week when we talked about David and Mephibosheth from 2 Samuel 9. We saw that it was for Jonathan's sake that David loved Mephibosheth.

It wasn't for Mephibosheth's sake so much. It was for Jonathan's sake that Mephibosheth was blessed. Now, we see something like that here again. It was for Abraham's sake that Lot was spared.

It was because of Abraham's prayer that not a single righteous man could be lost. It was because Abraham was Lot's relative. They were connected. Their friendship, their relationship, they were bound together.

And so, God remembered Abraham and had mercy on Lot. Now, do you see this pattern developing in the Old Testament? It's not just here. If you go looking for it, you will find it.

[16:44] It's a pattern preparing us to see something, isn't it? It's a pattern preparing us to see that God saves because of someone else.

He's pointing to you how He works, why He saves, and why He blesses. He does it for the sake of another. And so, when the last day comes, when the last day comes, and you, Christian brother, Christian sister, when you are there, and you are standing there in unspeakable joy, and when you have seen the earth consumed with burning fire, and when you have crowns of glory on your head, and a song of joy in your tongue, and you are watching the lost going into hell, you'll ask, why was I saved?

Why was I saved? And we'll know the answer, won't we? Not because of me, but because God remembered Jesus.

When the fire comes to this earth, and we are spared, it will be because God remembered Jesus. It was because of Jesus' prayers. It was because of our connection, and your connection, your union with Jesus Christ, He'll remember Him and have mercy on you.

And you'll say, that's why I'm saved. It's because of Him. And so our eyes will go from that horrific scene to Him, and we'll see Him and love Him all the more.

[18:29] See, Jesus is my Jonathan, and Jesus is my Abraham. And that is such a comfort. That is such a comfort.

That gives us great hope and expectation, doesn't it? Because my eternal security, my future, it doesn't depend upon fallible Abraham, who in the very next chapter is going to fall.

It depends on the perfect Son of God. Perfect Son of God, and He prays for me, so I'm safe. No trial then can sweep over me and take me from His hands, because I am His and He is mine.

And so let's trust Him then. Let's look to Jesus then in our trials. He knows how to save. Now secondly, our second post in this clothesline.

So we have two clotheslines, two posts here, and the first one is that God saves, and now the second one is that God judges. It's not just that God saves.

[19:36] It's that God judges. And if we take the judgment out of this passage, the salvation doesn't mean anything. Because remember, the theme of this passage is that God can save you from His judgment.

From His judgment. And that's the wonderful center of the Bible. That God saves people from His judgment by judging His Son in their place.

And so that's what we're going to see. Now, no matter how many times you see a documentary on the Titanic or a movie on the Titanic or read a book on the Titanic, you know how it ends, don't you? It always sinks. It always sinks. No matter how long the beginning is, no matter how much of the backstory you get, no matter how much of the detail you get for who's on board and what happened, at the end, the story is always the same.

The Titanic always sinks. Now, Sodom has been doomed for a long time. We've seen that. We all know what's going to happen.

[20:57] We know it's going to happen. And for the people there, it must have never seemed like it would happen. It was a total surprise. It never seems like it's going to happen and then it does.

That's the way things are. Have you ever had that in your life? I can't believe I'm here. And yet, here I am. I never thought it would happen, but here I am, preparing for a wedding, your wedding.

And you thought you'd be single for the rest of your life, but then all of a sudden, there you are.

You're standing there. Or you never thought this baby would come. And then the baby comes. No matter how long it seems like it, like, no matter how much it seems like it's never going to happen, it always does.

The Titanic always sinks. And so now it's the dawn of the final day. Sodom's final day. And the people of Sodom see their last sunrise.

But there's something missing in the city. There's not a single righteous man in the whole city. In verse 23, by the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land, and then the Lord rained burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah from the Lord out of the heavens.

[22:22] Now, we want to think about this, and I have three questions as we think about what God did. And we need to realize that we can't leave this back as a historical, interesting story, because everywhere in the Bible, God is using Sodom as a picture of what's going to happen on the last day.

So what we see happening here is what is going to happen to this planet. So three questions. First, what happened?

Second, why? Then third, when? So what happened? Well, judgment happened. Hell came down out of the heavens. It was like God scooped up with a hand some of the fires of hell and threw them down on the city, and everything was completely destroyed.

Everything was completely destroyed. Not a man was left. Not a woman was left. Not an animal was left. Not a woman in her kitchen. Not a man on his horse. Not a child in school.

Not a dog in the alleyway. Not a flower in the garden. Everything was completely destroyed. Burned up. And who was the first to be destroyed?

[23:48] Surprise of surprises. It was the one who was closest to Lot. It was Lot's wife. She was already a pillar on the plane.

She was running. She looked back. And judgment came. The angel said, don't look back. And she looked back. Her heart was still in Sodom.

And so she was not spared. Now what happened? Well, hell broke through the heavens and fell upon the earth.

And it came once. And it's going to come again. Are you ready? And you could say, well, it never seems like it's going to happen.

Well, things like some things don't seem like they're ever going to happen, but then they do. So are you ready? Why did it happen?

[24:45] It happened because of sin. It happened because of sin. Why will God destroy the present world?

Why will he throw this world and sinners into the lake of fire? Why will normal people, normal people, ordinary people, not Hitler, not Stalin, not really bad guys, not robbers, not thieves, not murderers, just normal people like the ones you know, why will they be there?

Because of sin. There's no other reason. sin. Only sin makes hell necessary. So God's glory and his honor and his righteousness is going to be upheld.

Every eye will see him and it will be crystal clear that he is righteous, that he hates sin and he loves righteousness. He hates selfishness and he hates pride and he loves love and humility.

And people will see that when they look over the landscapes of hell. It's a rather strange historical fact that a long time ago many Jewish rabbis, they tried to change the ending of the book of Isaiah.

[26:21] They switched chapters around and they flip-flopped some things. And you ask, well, why did they do that? Well, I'm not going to ask you to turn there because I'm going to read it. But they did not, they just could not stand how the way the book of Isaiah ends.

And we're going to get there someday, I'm sure, with Pastor John. But listen to it. God is talking about what the people in the new heavens and the new earth are going to do.

And believe it or not, this is what they will do. Listen to the very last verse. And they will go out and they will look upon the dead bodies of those who have rebelled against me.

Their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind. So why are the righteous going out and looking over this horrible landscape?

It's a horrible idea. But why are they there? It's because hell is this everlasting reminder that God is righteous. He's just.

[27:30] And so why does it happen? Well, God tells us in that verse that I read, it's because they rebelled against me. They rebelled against me. And so we need to get this straight.

We need to call things what they are. Sin is rebellion. It's not a faux pas. It's not a simple slip. It's not. We can't say to air is human and just wash our hands of it.

Sin is rebellion. People in hell are rebels and people in Sodom were rebels. They all knew God's law. You know what is right. And yet you don't do it.

You don't say, I'll obey you, God. You'll say, no, I will do what I want. It will be me, not you. That's rebellion. They all knew that God was righteous and he was worthy and they rebelled against him.

And that is why hell is necessary. That is what is going on. They said, I'll do what I want. And that's what Sodom was full of. It's people that, I will do what I want.

[28 : 31] I will live for what I want. And so it burned. And the warning is, if you think you can rebel against God and get away with it, how wrong you are.

You might go your whole life. Listen to me. You might go your whole life as prosperous and as healthy as can be.

People of Sodom were. But in the end, hell found them. The Titanic always sinks.

And there's only one way of escape. It's the cross of Jesus. You need to go to a place where judgment's already fallen. You need to go to a place where hell has already come, where you can experience hell in a substitute.

And so I can say, I've experienced hell, not in myself, but in Jesus. And he did that and he took it for me. So what about you?

[29 : 37] Is Jesus your savior? Well, that's what happened. That's why it happened. Now, when did it happen? When did it happen?

Well, turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 17. We're going to ask Jesus, when did this happen? And when is the next thing on the agenda?

The final judgment and the coming of Christ. When will that happen? Luke chapter 17 and verse 26. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.

People were eating, drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot.

People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

[30 : 56] It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. When did it happen? On an ordinary day?

On a normal day? People got up and they ate breakfast and they went to school and they went to work. They started cleaning up their houses. They went to the store and they bought and sold. They went to the garden and they built and planted. And then it happened. Titanic sunk. Hell came to earth.

Now Sodom is a very serious warning to all of us. Are you ready? Are you hearing it?

God will destroy the world and he will do it unexpectedly. We won't know that's going to happen.

We won't be able to figure it out at the last moment or the last few days.

[32 : 00] people will be cooking and cleaning and buying and selling and marrying and being given in marriage and then it will happen. And then there won't be a tomorrow.

You know, there's going to be a final day where there's no tomorrow on this earth. No tomorrow, no next day. See, all of history is rushing like a river to this Niagara Falls and eventually we are all going to go over and you have fallen into the river and you can't get out.

You can't get to the shore. You can't escape. You have this date with destiny. It's coming and you are going to be there. And you don't know when and you won't know when.

The sun came up and it happened. And so you were born on the Titanic. You were born on the Titanic.

Some of us will travel first class and some of us will travel third class. Some of us will travel with life and luxury and health and lots of good things and some of us will have a great deal of bad things.

[33 : 11] First class, third class, but either way we're all on this collision course with this day of judgment. You were born on the Titanic and the iceberg is making its way to us and we are making our way to it.

And you know, the captain and the crew of the Titanic saw the iceberg at the very last minute. They were going through the waters. The fog came apart a little bit and they were able to see the iceberg ahead and someone screamed iceberg ahead and the captain called for an emergency turn and he turned and turned and turned but it was too late.

The world is the Titanic and the Titanic always sinks. And so please listen to me. If you don't hear anything, just listen to this.

There's only one lifeboat and it's Jesus. You get on him or you go down. God knows how to save from his judgment and he's provided a way and it's Jesus Christ.

Christ. Okay? Now that's the lesson. Please take it to heart and listen. And if you are saved, how humble you should be that Jesus would save you.

[34:27] Now, remember Moses' words that we started with. Show me your ways that I might know you and I may know you. Now God has shown you his ways.

He saves and he judges. Now, what do you do with that revelation? I heard somewhere today or this week that preaching is an encounter with God.

It's an encounter with God. It's not the beginning of worship. It's the culmination of worship because here we meet God. And I think and I hope you've seen something from who God is from this passage in Genesis 19.

Now, what do you do with it? I want to give you some things to take out the back door with you and take into your life and take into your marriage and take into your work and take into your family, take into your private life.

Four things. Four points of application very briefly. first, flee sin. Flee sin. If you are seeing anything from Genesis 19 is that sin is what calls down God's destructive, destroying, soul-destroying judgment.

[35:44] And so, how hateful it is. You wouldn't drink poison and you wouldn't keep things like that around, would you? Well, sin is worse than that. And so, Jesus says, cut off right hands.

Gouge out right eyes. Take drastic, violent, intentional action against sin. Because, why? It's better to lose your right hand than to keep it and then have your whole body thrown into hell.

That's what Jesus says. It wasn't what I made up. And so, you flee sin. Second, believers, trust Him with your next trial.

We saw this earlier. If God can save you from hell and judgment, then surely He can save you from anything else. So, bring God into that trial that you're facing now.

Bring the gospel of His salvation into that trial and put them next to each other and say, which one's bigger and which one's smaller? And if He saved me from the big one, the small one isn't going to be such a problem for Him, is it?

[36:53] If He knows how to save us from hell and from sin, the very thing that He hates, then surely He can save me from this trial. Third, if you're lost, if you've encountered God tonight, you'll believe Him to save your never-dying soul.

you'll run right now to Jesus. He's shown you His ways. He can save you from His judgment and He does it through Jesus.

Fourth, worship. This is the final one. Worship. If God is a Savior and a judge, those are things that He needs to be worshipped for.

God doesn't show us things in His Word so that we can just know them. they're directed to the end that we will worship Him. That's why He saves us.

For His glory. And so say thank you for His righteousness. Thank you for your righteousness, God. Thank you that you are a just God.

[38:02] And thank Him for His grace. Amazing grace. He snatched you out of the fire. He took your hand and He tore you out of the city of destruction. with that gracious violence.

Because He loved you. And if He snatched your life and your soul and your body out of the flames of hell, then surely you should say thank you and praise Him.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we come to you and we ask that the Spirit of God, that you would send your Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, into our hearts to take these truths and drive them, drive them like nails into our hearts.

Give them barbs and points so they stick there and they stick with us as we go. That we wouldn't just be like someone who looks in the mirror and then walks away and forgets what he saw.

But I pray that you would come in your power and your grace and press your words, your truth, yourself, into our hearts and change us.

[39:24] Get your fingers all around us and press your truth into us and change our lives, save sinners, show your mighty power and your mighty grace in doing that.

Such a frightening thing to think of the last day and the last judgment and it can be something that seems so unreal. Pray that you would make it real to us, that you would give us the faith to believe what you have shown us to be the truth about yourself and about what you are doing and about Jesus Christ.

And it's in his name I pray. Amen. Amen.