

IN THE BEGINNING GOD**Judgment and Mercy Genesis 18:16—19:38**

“Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” Genesis 18:25c

Day 1: Read Genesis 18:16–33.

1. Abraham has just shared a meal with the LORD and is now invited into his confidence. What privileged status does Abraham have? (Isa. 41:8; see also Gen. 20:7a and Amos 3:7) How did Abraham (then Abram) attain that status? (Gen. 12:1–3; 17:5–7)
2. What privileged status do followers of Jesus have? (Jn. 15:14–15) How did we attain that status? (Eph. 1:4–9)
3. What aspects of Abraham’s character do we see displayed in this conversation or “prayer” with God? What does the fact that this conversation is even taking place say about God’s character?
4. On what basis does Abraham intercede for Sodom? (vv. 23, 25)

Day 2: Read Genesis 19:1–29.

5. Of what sins are Sodom and Gomorrah guilty? (Ezek. 16:49–50; Isa. 3:9; Jude 7) What is the result of any and all sin? (Rom. 6:23)
6. Though guilty of many sins, Sodom has come to be equated with homosexuality. What is God’s view of homosexual practice? (Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:26–27)
7. The sinfulness of Sodom and Gomorrah is the result of the downward spiral of humanity trying to live apart from God. Look at the charges against all of fallen humanity in Romans 1:18–32, and trace this slide into degradation.
8. In contrast, what has God done for all who believe in Jesus? (Eph. 2:1–10)

Day 3: Read Genesis 19:1–38.

9. What do the men of the town want? (vv. 4, 5) What is Lot’s jarring response? (vv. 6–8)
10. How is Lot saved? (v. 16) What does the way he is rescued show us about God? How is it a picture of our salvation?

11. Abraham, though imperfect, is an example of a person of great faith. The picture we get of Lot is a bit murkier. What emotions seem to be driving Lot in his escape to safety? (vv. 18–20; 30)
12. How do Lot’s sons-in-law respond to his warning about the impending destruction? What happens to Lot’s wife? Why?
13. How does 19:29 summarize this fateful day?
14. Lot’s daughters make it to safety with their father, but what do they then do? What will the fruit of their sin—the Moabite and Ammonite peoples—mean for the Israelites, the descendants of Abraham? (Lev. 18:21—note that Molech is an Ammonite god; Num. 25:1–3; 1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Chr. 20:1)

Days 4 and 5: Review Genesis 18:16—19:29.

15. Genesis was written when the Israelites were preparing to enter the land promised to Abraham’s descendants. In his exhortation in Deuteronomy 29, Moses uses the example of Sodom and Gomorrah to warn the Israelites about what would happen if they “abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers” (Deut. 29:25). Later Jesus uses Sodom and Gomorrah in a warning to the people about the final, universal Day of Judgment. What does Jesus say about his coming in Luke 17:28–35? How does Revelation describe that day? (Rev. 6:15–17; 20:11–15)
16. What does Jesus’ coming mean for those who have trusted him to remove their sins? (Lk. 21:27, 28; Rev. 21:1–7)
17. The Day of Judgment is not a very popular topic, yet Jesus speaks of it frequently, and Revelation offers vivid pictures of what it will be like. Do you ever find yourself uncomfortable with the idea of divine punishment? If so, where do you think this discomfort comes from?
18. How do you think your life would be different if you had a firmer grasp on the reality of judgment and thought about it more often?
19. Consider again the story of Abraham’s “prayer” for Sodom, and the Lord’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Pray that you would trust that “the Judge of all the earth [will] do right” (18:25).