"How to Get In and Out of Trouble"

Genesis 19

In Genesis 18[18-19] we were reminded of God's master plan for the world and Abraham's part in it. *"I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him"* (that *"all nations on earth will be blessed through him."*—18[18]). But there are people who live directly contrary to God's ways, and places where the vulnerable are not safe. When the men/angels got up to leave a heaven-like place of righteousness (***sedaqah***) at Abraham's they headed to a hell like place. In 18:20 we read that "the outcry (***sa'aqah***) against Sodom and Gomorrah [from victims of violence and injustice] is so great and their sin so grevious" that it has become a death-producing social order. How did it become the worst city to live in, and what lessons are there for us?

Opening Questions – Choose one.

- Growing up, who was the disciplinarian in your family? How did that person typically discipline you?
- When it comes to punishment, do you find it easier to take it, or to dish it out? Why?

Study Questions

1) **Read Genesis 19:1-29.** Compare Lot's hospitality to these angelic visitors with that given by Abraham in 18[2-8]. What significance (or effect) does hospitality have in each of the stories?

2) How important is hospitality for travellers or newcomers (students, immigrants, etc.) to our city in a day with hotels and restaurants?

3) In verses 1-9, how does what the residents of Sodom say and do help us see why they are under God's judgment?

4) Is Lot's being in Sodom when it is about to be destroyed simply a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or is there more to it (Gen. 13[12]; 14[12]; 19[1]; cf. Psalm 1)?[1] What effects does living in Sodom seem to have had on Lot and his family (vv.1-14)?

5) How is the Lord`s mercy evident in his treatment of Lot and his family (vv.10-22)?

6) Describe how God's judgment works out in Lot's family and in the two cities (vv.23-29)?

7) **Read Genesis 19:30-38.** What are the results of Lot's earlier choices in the life of his family?

8) A recent report ranked Vancouver 3rd among the world's best 10 cities to live in[2]. What standards does God use to evaluate the city/people of Sodom?

9) How might we raise the quality of life and hospitality for the vulnerable in our city/church/group?

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[1] In Genesis 13[12] we read of Lot's choice to set up his tent close to Sodom. By 14[12] we find him "living in Sodom". Here in 19[1] we find he has become a central figure in it (i.e. "sitting in the gateway of the city" = the place where leading citizens and elders gathered to do business—e.g. Ruth 4[1-2]; 2 Sam. 15[1-4]).

[2] The Economist Intelligence Unit based it's rating on "how 'tolerable' it is to live in a particular place given its crime levels, threat of conflict, quality of medical care, levels of censorship, temperature, schools and transport links" http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/pictures/9477990/The-worlds-10-best-cities-to-live-in.html?frame=2311063