

99-02-28a

Turn with me for our scripture reading this morning to Genesis chapter 19. Normally we would have scripture reading from another part of the Word of God, but we're going to be seeing extensive portions of the Word of God this morning, and we want to begin this morning by refreshing our minds with the details of the visit of the two divine messengers to Lot and his deliverance from Sodom. There's a lot of different ways that this can be approached.

We could go verse by verse, we could look at details and try to answer puzzling questions for ourselves, but there is a message in this chapter that is emphasized elsewhere in the Word of God, and one that we don't want to miss, and there are so many spectacular and unusual details in here that sometimes we get into the trees versus the forest thing, and we look at some of these particulars and miss the overarching message, which I think is the purpose for which God put this in our Bible. So we want to refresh our minds on how the course of events from the time these messengers leave the presence of the Lord God and Abraham and appear rather quickly for a 40-mile trip down in the outskirts of Sodom. So Genesis 19 verse 1, now the two angels, and this is the only time that the word that is sometimes translated angels is used in this story with reference to the divine messengers, the rest of the time they are called anashim or men, but here it is the word malakim.

We heard and studied last week that this really means messenger. It's the last book of the Old Testament's title, my messenger, malakhi. This is malak or malakim in this case, there are two of them, and it has the same meaning and is translated in the Septuagint by the Greek word angelos.

Angelos means messenger. There is no distinction either in the Hebrew or the Greek as to what type of messenger it is. There is no real distinction in the Old or the New Testament with regard to whether a messenger is angelic or divine.

We don't have a special word for a divine messenger as opposed to a human one. So you will find angelos used in the New Testament for both divine messengers, such as the one who came and loosed Peter out of prison, and human messengers such as the pastors of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. The same is true in the Old Testament. The stories that speak of messengers from God, sometimes looking at the story you can tell that this ends up being a prophet or another individual that God has charged with delivering a message, usually to Israel.

Other times it is fairly clearly a divine messenger. People afterwards say, I have seen the Lord. So the question in our minds, of course, after seeing chapter 18 is, well, who exactly are these individuals? And sometimes we sort of ask ourselves the wrong questions, because if the Bible is vague on a point and puts its attention and

concentration elsewhere, my instinct is to try to do the same.

And if something is sort of mentioned in passing, or if something is purposely, and in this case it is very obviously left somewhat indeterminate, it doesn't say that they had six wings, or that they had flaming swords, or anything that would indicate to us that they are in fact angels in the English sense of the word. It doesn't indicate to us that they had a holy glow, or that no one could look upon them, or that people immediately fell on their face in the dirt, which is what typically happens when people see a theophany, an appearance of God. It is left unclear, and will remain so as far as I'm concerned.

I can't tell you if these were human or divine. I suspect that they are angelic companions, that they are something of an honor guard. You wouldn't exactly figure that God needs a bodyguard per se, but you know how sometimes someone who is, especially in the ancient Near East, someone who is important would never travel alone.

They are accompanied by those who smooth the way, who handle introductions, and who fend away people who shouldn't be approaching, and that sort of thing. It is clearly God in human form that appears to Abraham. There is no doubt of that.

He speaks as God. He speaks in the first person about what he is about to do. Abraham recognizes him as the head figure of the party of three.

Is it a Christophany? Is it the second person of the Trinity? I don't believe so. Hebrews chapter 1 is clear that God spoke in many different ways in the times past, but in the latter days has spoken by a son. Although it has been a very popular view that the person who addresses Abraham in chapter 18 is a Christophany, a pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus Christ, I could not defend that from the Word of God.

The Scripture says it is God. It says it is the Lord, Adonai, and the plans and the judgment that is rendered, that function belongs to God the Father, who hands it over to the Son. Jesus says, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

He says this after his resurrection, after his victory on the cross. Prior to that, the reason it was given to him is it belongs originally to God the Father. In this time in human history, God the Father still retains the judging function.

When this individual says, I have come down to see if the outcry is justified that has come before me, these are functions that God the Father executes. I believe, and I don't know what the Latin term would be, a patrophany, an appearance of God the Father in incarnate form. There is also the necessity of recognizing that the messenger and the one who sent him are often virtually indistinguishable in Scripture.

We touched on this a little bit last time, that we are to become so identified with Christ that we blend into him, that we put on the new man, we put on Christ. Often, someone who is clearly a messenger or an angel speaks for God in the first person. There is an

equal possibility that this is God's chief spokesman angel who speaks for God in the first person and who is as close as you are going to get.

There are scriptures that say no man has seen God at any time. This is God in the fullness of his divine glory. But God is not imprisoned in his glory so that he can never communicate in the first person.

God can clothe himself in clouds. There are many poetic passages we can go to in the Old Testament talking about God riding in the thick darkness. He has to envelop himself in darkness to not melt us all down when he appears on earth.

He came down on Mount Sinai. It was God the Father who delivered the law on Mount Sinai and spoke to Moses and revealed his glory. God is not a prisoner of his own magnificence and his own omnipotence.

He can, as it were, scale himself down and have conversations with people. We sometimes get all the omnis going with God and we forget that he is powerful enough to control his own glory. This is an opinion of mine.

I don't think anyone can conclusively solve this puzzle. But I believe that this is God the Father who has manifested himself in the form of a fleshly visitor, someone who is capable of sitting down and resting under a tree, who is capable of partaking of a meal, who is capable of walking down the road and standing on a hilltop and looking down on the city of Sodom, who speaks in the first person about confirming promises to Abraham and coming about this time next year. He says, I will come this time next year.

He doesn't say the Lord God will come and Sarah will have a son and so forth. Whatever violence that may do to some versions of systematic theology, I'm sorry, but that's what the word of God says and people just have to adjust their theology accordingly. These two individuals in chapter 19 are Malachim.

We haven't even gotten through our scripture reading yet, but that's what they are. This is the only place they are so designated. I think in the three-part manifestation, the three-person manifestation of the divine visitation, that number three is significant.

I think it does represent and symbolize the Trinity. It is an early clue to the tripartite nature of God. I don't think that it can be pressed to the point of saying that the other two individuals are necessarily incarnations of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

I think it is just a suggestion that one individual is not sufficient. One earthly manifestation is not necessarily sufficient to represent the divine presence, a divine visitation of this nature. But beyond that, these two messengers came to Sodom in the evening.

This is the evening of the same day. They have been manifested now for half a day. They

came in the heat of the day to Abraham, had the meal in the afternoon.

Now suddenly, 40 miles away, these two messengers, who walked out of sight from Abraham, have appeared at the gate of Sodom. They do not appear to have had to actually press their feet to the earth all the way in between, because this is just a matter of minutes or a few hours at most from leaving Abraham to arriving in Sodom, which we've already reviewed how far that is. Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom.

Sitting in the gate, this is an assembly area. You have two major assembly areas for a city, especially a city of this size. You have the gates of the city, where travelers come and go, where commerce is conducted, where people are greeted.

This is the place of judgment, the place where court cases are tried, decisions are rendered. The other common place of meeting is the square. The square is typically the bazaar, the marketplace, where the population of the city will come to grocery shop.

It's the equivalent of Walmart there in the middle of town. The gates of the city are more like the city hall, if you will. Police station, that kind of thing.

So they've come to the gates, and Lot is sitting in the gate. Lot has an official function of some sort in the city of Sodom. He's some sort of a potentator, rather, in the city.

He has some authority, even though he's a sojourner. Apparently his wisdom, probably rubbed off from his uncle Abraham, has qualified him to sit in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.

There is something remarkable about the appearance of these two individuals. We see it throughout this story. Lot immediately recognizes that these are unusual men.

Lot does not run up and bow himself down with his face to the earth for every person that walks up to the gate of Sodom. These men, just as when Abraham saw them from afar, he rises up in the heat of the day and makes much over them. Lot can tell immediately.

You notice that none of the men of Sodom seem to notice anything. It doesn't say all the men of Sodom. There are many other men gathered in the gate.

This is a big public place. Lot is the one who recognizes them. I think the reason Lot recognizes them, as someone special at least, is that he's a believer.

However many problems Lot has, he has sufficient insight, he has sufficient perception to tell that these are special men. He bowed himself with his face to the ground, and he said, Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house. This is highly unusual.

There are hundreds of people going in and out of the gates of Sodom, but he wants to

extend his personal hospitality to these men. You get an inkling, just as with Abraham, that he's got an idea that these are out of the ordinary, not just unusual looking, but that there's something afoot. He just has an instinct, he has a feeling, if you will, that this is someone he needs to bring into his home.

Please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise early and go on your way. And they said, No, but we will spend the night in the open square.

That's an important detail. Why do they even suggest this? Why don't they just say, Okay, fine. We sort of came to see you anyway.

They said, We will spend the night in the open square. But he insisted strongly. This is a word that appears several times in this chapter.

He insisted strongly. He urged them. Urge is a good translation for this Hebrew word, *patfar*.

So they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread and they ate. There's a little bit of irony in verse 3 there because the word for feast is the word used for a banquet, a big spread.

But what he actually feeds them is unleavened bread. These are sort of traveling biscuits. They're quick to make.

They're not expensive. There's no mention of meat or preparation. This is at the evening hour as the sun is going down when people typically would eat their supper.

There's no waiting period as there was with Abraham when the bull was slaughtered. But it's interesting. These individuals eat two meals with humankind.

They eat the banquet with Abraham where Abraham said, let me prepare you a morsel and puts out this huge feast. And they eat with Lot who says, let me prepare you a banquet and he gives them biscuits. But they did eat.

Now before they lay down, verse 4, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. It's unusual that it says old and young, all the people from every quarter. Why does it say this? This tells us that, among other things, there are two generations.

Typically if you think of a civilization, you've got the older generation and the younger generation. We even have this in English. So is it just the young people that have gone bad? What happened to the good old values from World War II? And now we've got these boomers and the 60s and the erosion of morality and so forth.

It's the youngsters that have messed the country up. Well, here in Sodom, we're a

generation beyond that, if you will. Not only the young people are perverse and perverted and corrupt, but so are the old, the old people, all the people in the city.

All the generations represented in Sodom are all thinking the same way. It puts you in mind of the three generation curse that God will speak to Israel later on. If you have the fathers go bad, their children go bad, and you get down to the third generation and they follow in the footsteps of their fathers and their grandfathers, I will cut them off.

You get the idea here that you've got at least two generations well represented here and they're all corrupt. So there's a reason why it tells us old and young, all the people from every quarter. It doesn't matter whether they're on the wrong side of the tracks.

They probably didn't have tracks in Sodom. But they had a poor quarter. They had the nice wealthy suburbs and they had the squalid side of town.

It seems like in a lot of towns it's the north side that seems to be poverty stricken for some reason. It's probably because God favors the south. I don't know.

Anyway, from every quarter, it doesn't matter what their economic station is. It doesn't matter if they're well off or if they're poor. It doesn't matter if they're old or if they're young.

The Bible goes to pains to point out to us that this civilization represented in Sodom is utterly corrupt. They surrounded the house. They encircled it.

They don't want anyone to escape. And they called to Lot and said to him, Where are the men who came to you tonight? They saw them. And bring them out to us that we may know them.

The Hebrew verb yadah is used something on the order of 1,048 times in the Old Testament. Yadah and its cognates are used over a thousand times in the Old Testament. There's been much made when people get to the foreknowledge of God in the New Testament and trying to say, well, no means to know in an intimate way and so forth.

And there's been a lot of hay made over that. But out of those 1,048 usages in the Old Testament, there are only 15 uses that are a euphemism for physical relations. This is one of them.

Out of those 15, there's only two where it's not a normal heterosexual relationship. Adam knew his wife Eve. We saw that earlier in the book.

There are 15 places where yadah is used as a euphemism for intercourse. This is one of two places where it is used for homosexual intercourse. Bring them out to us that we may know them.

Now, there have been commentators that have tried to suggest, there's a big wave of political correctness where homosexuality is not such a bad thing. And people have tried to soften the Bible's stance on homosexuality and explain away the passages. They come to this and they say, oh, there's only 13 uses of yadah as a euphemism for physical relations.

And they just wanted to chat them up. They just wanted to get to know them. They thought they were nice-looking guys.

They came from afar. I don't think we need to dignify that with a response. If you go to verse 8, if they're just looking for a nice conversation, why does Lot offer them his daughters in their place? Does he say, well, my daughters are sparkling, witty conversationalists.

Let me bring them out and let them have a chat with you. It does not wash. But there are churches who claim to be Christian and who claim to be homosexual-friendly and who don't see anything wrong with the lifestyle.

And this is the way they get around passages like this. It's a tragic thing. By the way, I did mention that there are 15 and there are two that use this term as a euphemism for homosexual.

We will see the other passage here shortly. Lot went out to them. They said, bring them out to us so we may know them.

They find these men. And you can get the idea. Here's two men traveling together.

They may think, hey, birds of a feather, these guys. Here's two men. They're physically attractive.

Let's bring them out. And this tells you the degeneracy of the town, that it's not safe to be in the square. Lot insists that they come in.

And even in his house, they're not safe. People have surrounded the house. There's a mob outside clamoring to bring these men out and have their way with them.

Lot went out to them through the doorway. You have to give Lot credit. Lot is not going to come off well in this chapter at all.

But he does go out and face the mob. And you get the idea that a little bit of the integrity of his uncle Abraham remains. A little bit of the integrity that belongs to a believer remains.

He goes out and faces the crowd on behalf of his guests. And he shut the door behind him and said, please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly. This is part of Lot's problem.

My brethren. He looks at them as his brothers. They do not look at him as a brother.

What do they say down in verse 9? They say, this one came in as a sojourner, and now he's trying to act like a judge. They say, you're a stranger. You're not one of us.

He's trying to say, oh, my brothers. They are not brothers. They should never have been categorized in Lot's mind as brothers.

He should not have been living there in the first place. We know he should have really never left his uncle. But this is a part of his problem.

Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly. See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Now, in the context of the passage, what does Yadah mean? They've never had a conversation.

Please let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish. This is a shocking statement from Lot. And there's a reason why it's shocking.

This is one of the puzzles we will solve this morning. You may do to them as you wish. Only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof.

And they said, stand back. Now they're sort of talking to each other. This one came in to stay here.

This one is a sojourner is what it literally says. This one is a sojourner. And he keeps acting as a judge.

Now we will deal worse with you than with them. If you don't let them come out, well, we'll just have our way with you, Lot. So they pressed hard against the man Lot.

And this word, press hard, by the way, is the same as verse three. When he insisted strongly, he urged them to come into his house. Now the crowd is urging Lot.

They pressed hard against the man Lot and came near to break down the door. They're going to get Lot. They're going to get the guests.

They're just going to take the whole thing in this unbridled lust. But in verse 10, the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them and shut the door. Remember the last time we saw this phrase, shut the door? Somebody else was brought inside and the door was shut by divine hands.

Back in the happenings right before the flood. So the men reached out their hands. Lot is still out there.

And you have to give him credit. He's got physical courage, if not the brains to go with it.

He is out there.

And he refuses to cave in. And he is in physical danger himself. And the men reach out their hands, pull him inside, and shut the door.

And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door. Now you think this is kind of strange. Wouldn't you be shocked if you were suddenly struck blind? Why would you still be feeling around for the door when you're blind? This is not the normal Hebrew word for blindness.

This word is only used twice in the Old Testament. The other place, if you remember the episode in 2 Kings, where Elisha deceives the Arameans who have come to attack the countryside there. And they've come specifically.

They're trying to find Elisha. And they are said to have been struck blind there. And he leads them to the border.

He says, I'll take you to where you want to go. I'll take you to the city and so forth. And he actually takes them to the border of the country.

And they don't seem to be discomforted by blindness either. It doesn't really mean to be blind to where you can see nothing. They are divinely prevented from seeing the door.

They can still see. They can see each other. They can see the house.

They don't realize that they're blind. But it's like every time they turn a corner to another side of the house, they can't find the door anymore. And they say, oh, I must be at the side house.

And they keep going around from side to side to side, and they never find the door. And they weary themselves. They just keep looking and looking.

And it's not a blindness in the sense of not being able to see. It's a blindness in the sense of not being able to find. They are seeking something, and they can't find it.

They are prevented from finding what they're looking for. And it's a real unusual word. There's a lot that's been said about it.

But they are prevented from finding what they seek. And this is a part of the divine pattern. People seek happiness.

They seek fulfillment. They seek the satisfaction of a desire in a lot of illicit ways. God has so constructed us, constructed our souls, that happiness is only to be found in him.

These people who have rejected God, who have rejected everything, and are following

their own lustful desires, they're never going to find what they're looking for. So they just wear themselves out looking. And that's what people do in this life.

If they have rejected the opportunity to have a relationship with God, they're going to weary themselves for the rest of their life looking for something they'll never find. Then the men said to Lot, in verse 12, Have you anyone else here? Then you may have son-in-law there. I believe this is a corruption in our text.

And if you so choose, I would just put a light line through that. Your sons, your daughters, whomever you have in this city, take them out of this place. For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.

Notice they're talking now, not in the first person. They're saying the Lord has sent us. In fact, this is the root meaning of *laak* in Hebrew.

You put a maim in front of it, which is a way of turning something into a participle. *Maalak*, but *laak*, the verb, which is actually not found in the Hebrew Old Testament, but its cognates are, means to send. And literally, *maalak* means one cent.

That's how it comes to mean messenger. Of course, we've learned that *apostello* in the New Testament means one cent. But *angelas*, *maalak*, *apostle*, all basically come from the same idea of someone who is sent to represent.

So, the Lord has sent us to destroy it. We will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great. This is something that took place over a period of time, and there is an outcry against it.

Someone is making a case. Someone has a *riv*, *r-i-v*, or *r-i-b* in Hebrew. God will later tell Israel, I have a case against you.

Someone has made a case. There is an outcry against this place, before the face of the Lord. So, Lot recognizes that these individuals are special.

He recognizes, he bows down, he feeds them a meal, he brings them in, he defends them at the risk of his life, and is willing to sacrifice his daughters on their behalf. So, now they speak. And they say, we're going to destroy.

This is that no previous mention. We know, Abraham knows, what their mission is. But up to this point, they've said nothing.

They have appeared. Lot has extended hospitality to them. The crowd has clamored for them, and has been disabled from finding them.

Now, they're inside the house. Now, their purpose is revealed. And they say, you, your sons, your daughters, leave this place.

We have been sent by the Lord to destroy it. The outcry against it has grown great, before the face of the Lord. Well, this is the crux of the thing.

This is the point. What is Lot's reaction? So, Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry. You can actually translate it either way.

But who were to marry his daughters. This is the ancient Near Eastern marriage idea. It's similar to what we're familiar with, with Joseph and Mary.

When someone was betrothed, they were already treated as husband and wife, even before the marriage has taken place, or has been consummated. They were looked at as a unit. These are the prospective sons-in-law of Lot, who were to marry his daughters.

They said, get up, get out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. But to his sons-in-law, he seemed to be Yitzhak. It's the very same word that describes Sarah's reaction when God told her that she would conceive and bear a son, or when God tells Abraham and she overhears it in the tent, and it says Sarah laughed within herself, she gets the idea that that's ridiculous.

And it is amusing to her. The idea is so far-fetched as to be ridiculous and provoking laughter. That's the reaction of these sons-in-law, these fiancées of his daughters.

To his sons-in-law, it's not like he seemed to be joking, like he was making wisecracks, but it provoked laughter in them. They thought, that's ridiculous. They may have heard about his experiences the night before and thought, well, Lot, you've been made paranoid.

You had a bad experience with the crowd there, and now you think God's going to destroy the city. You're nuts. They are completely insensitive to the message.

So Lot is real ready to go out and communicate to others, isn't he? He's ready to go out and tell the crowd what they need to do. He's ready to go tell the sons-in-law what they need to do. He's ready to go tell the divine messengers what they need to do.

Don't stay in the square. Come to my house. He's got a real impact-oriented life, doesn't he? When the morning dawned, in verse 15, the man urged Lot to hurry, saying, Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.

Same language that was used when God was talking with Abraham in the last chapter. I will not sweep them away if there are so many righteous. Lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.

Verse 16, Lot dallied. That's the best way to translate it. Lot lingered.

He dallied. When it comes to personally implementing the word of the messengers, Lot's

got a problem. He can tell the messengers what to do.

He can tell the crowd what to do. He can tell his son-in-law what to do. But he himself can't seem to get any urgency going.

He can't seem to apply these words to himself. While he lingered, the men seized his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters. Notice there's just enough messengers.

They have just enough hands to grab Lot, the wife, and the two daughters. Four hands, four people to drag. And they physically dragged him, the Lord being merciful to him.

And they brought him out and set him outside the city. They have to drag Lot out of this bad place where he lives. Even though the night before, they nearly kill him.

They're willing to do all these rapacious things. But Lot can't bring himself to leave. God is merciful and God forces him out.

There's a lesson there that we'll return to later. So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, Escape for your life. Do not look behind you, nor stay anywhere in the plain.

Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed. Here's another divine command. It's clear.

There's no doubt. There's no confusion. It can't be misconstrued.

Flee to the mountains. Where does Noah end up being delivered from the great destruction of the flood? On a mountain. You go to the mountain.

Jesus will sit on the mountain and call his disciples up there. Moses will go to the mountain and receive the words of the law. Certain things take place on, you know, people talk about mountaintop experiences.

Well, Lot has been told to go have a mountaintop experience. Escape for your life. Don't look behind you.

Don't stay anywhere in the plain. If you look at this plain on the map, it extends all up and down the area of the Dead Sea. It's an extensive place.

This destruction is not going to be limited to Sodom. It's going to wipe out the entire plain. Everything, you know, that's the lowest point on earth there where the Dead Sea is.

And you get the idea. It suggests to you the flood. Where's the water going to go if you have a flood? It would go to the lowest lying portions.

It would go to the plain. Well, God has promised he'll never destroy the earth by a flood again, so he's going to use a different method. But there's a suggestion here that this, you want to get out of the plain.

The judgment of God is going to fill it up. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed. Lot says, please, no, my lords.

Same sort of a response God gets when he tells Sarah she's going to conceive and bear a child. And Lot says no to the divine messenger. They drag him out by the hands.

They say, flee to the mountain or you're going to be swept away. And he says, no. Oh, no.

Indeed, now, your servant has found favor in your sight. He's just buttering him up here. This is the prelude to trying to get your own way.

Has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy, which you have shown me by saving my life. But I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me, and I die. What kind of thinking is this? You've got two divine messengers.

God has dragged you out by the arms and got you outside the city. Oh, I can't do it. I can't go to the mountains.

Some evil might overtake me. I might die. See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one.

Please let me escape there. Is it not a little one? He's just whining. He's whining.

He's wheedling. He's, oh, I can't do it. You know, if God tells you to do something, he's not going to tell you to do something you can't do.

But we're like Lot sometimes. We forget that. Let me escape there.

It's just a little one. And my soul shall live. Look at the mercy of God.

The messenger says, see, I have favored you concerning this thing also. This favored you, literally in Hebrew, I have lifted up your face. The idea here is that you bow your face in supplication, and when someone lifts up your face, they're granting your request.

They say, okay, get up off your face. I've heard you. I'm going to do what you've asked.

So get up off your face. So he says, I've lifted up your face concerning this matter. Get your face out of the dirt.

Get your nose out of the ground, let's say. And I'll do this thing for you. So, I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken.

And it gives you an idea of the mercy and the grace of God. Here is this miserable excuse for a believer, Lot. And because of his fear and his failure, he has spoken up for a city, and God will spare the city for Lot's sake.

He says, hurry and escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there. Therefore, the name of the city was called Zoar. Zoar, or the Hebrew from which that comes, literally means little.

And this city is sort of named after Lot. Little. The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar.

So all these things have happened in the early morning. Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah from the Lord out of the heavens. So he overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

Well, this is where we're going to have to stop and take a break. When we come back, this is probably the longest our scripture reading has ever gone. But it's necessary for us to have these things firmly in mind and to see what else the Bible has to say with reference to these subjects.

But we'll stop here and take a break. When we come back, we'll see what takes place as God overthrows the cities.