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GOOD NEWS BIBLE

Abraham Pleads for Sodom

16 Then the men left and went to a place where they could look down at Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on their way. And the LORD said to himself, “I will not hide from Abraham what I am going to do. His descendants will become a great and mighty nation, and through him I will bless all the nations. I have chosen him in order that he may command his sons and his descendants to obey me and to do what is right and just. If they do, I will do everything for him that I have promised.”

20 Then the Lord said to Abraham, “There are terrible accusations against Sodom and Gomorrah, and their sin is very great. I must go down to find out whether or not the accusations which I have heard are true.”

22 Then the two men left and went on towards Sodom, but the LORD remained with Abraham. 23 Abraham approached the Lord and asked, “Are you really going to destroy the innocent with the guilty? 24 If there are fifty innocent people in the city, will you destroy the whole city? Won’t you spare it in order to save the fifty? 25 Surely you won’t kill the innocent with the guilty. That’s impossible! You can’t do that. If you did, the innocent would be punished along with the guilty. That is impossible. The judge of all the earth has to act justly.”

26 The LORD answered, “If I find fifty innocent people in Sodom, I will spare the whole city for their sake.”

27 Abraham spoke again: “Please forgive my boldness in continuing to speak to you, Lord. I am only a man and have no right to say anything. 28 But perhaps there will be only forty-five innocent people instead of fifty. Will you destroy the whole city because there are five too few?”

The Lord answered, “I will not destroy the city if I find forty-five innocent people.”

29 Abraham spoke again: “Perhaps there will be only forty.”

He replied, “I will not destroy it if there are forty.”

30 Abraham said, “Please don’t be angry, Lord, but I must speak again. What if there are only thirty?”

He said, “I will not do it if I find thirty.”

31 Abraham said, “Please forgive my boldness in continuing to speak to you, Lord. Suppose that only twenty are found?”

He said, “I will not destroy the city if I find twenty.”

32 Abraham said, “Please don’t be angry, Lord, and I will speak just once more.

What if only ten are found?”

He said, “I will not destroy it if there are ten.”

33 After he had finished speaking with Abraham, the LORD went away, and Abraham returned home.

The Sinfulness of Sodom

19 When the two angels came to Sodom that evening, Lot was sitting at the city gate. As soon as he saw them, he got up and went to meet them. He bowed down before them 2 and said, “Sirs, I am here to serve you. Please come to my house. You can wash your feet and stay the night. In the morning you can get up early and go on your way.”

But they answered, “No, we will spend the night here in the city square.”

3 He kept on urging them, and finally they went with him to his house. Lot ordered his servants to bake some bread and prepare a fine meal for the guests. When it was ready, they ate it.

4 Before the guests went to bed, the men of Sodom surrounded the house. All the men of the city, both young and old, were there. 5 They called out to Lot and asked, “Where are the men who came to stay with you tonight? Bring them out to us!” The men of Sodom wanted to have sex with them.

6 Lot went outside and closed the door behind him. 7 He said to them, “Friends, I beg you, don’t do such a wicked thing! 8 Look, I have two daughters who are still virgins. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do whatever you want with them. But don’t do anything to these men; they are guests in my house, and I must protect them.”

9 But they said, “Get out of our way, you foreigner! Who are you to tell us what to do? Out of our way, or we will treat you worse than them.” They pushed Lot back and moved up to break down the door. 10 But the two men inside reached out, pulled Lot back into the house, and shut the door. 11 Then they struck all the men outside with blindness, so that they couldn’t find the door.

Lot Leaves Sodom

12 The two men said to Lot, “If you have anyone else here—sons, daughters, sons-in-law, or any other relatives living in the city—get them out of here, 13 because we are going to destroy this place. The LORD has heard the terrible accusations against these people and has sent us to destroy Sodom.”

14 Then Lot went to the men that his daughters were going to marry, and said, “Hurry up and get out of here; the LORD is going to destroy this place.” But they thought he was joking.

15 At dawn the angels tried to make Lot hurry. “Quick!” they said. “Take your

wife and your two daughters and get out, so that you will not lose your lives when the city is destroyed.” 16 Lot hesitated. The Lolen, however, had pity on him; so the men took him, his wife, and his two daughters by the hand and led them out of the city. 17 Then one of the angels said, “Run for your lives! Don’t look back and don’t stop in the valley. Run to the hills, so that you won’t be killed.”

18 But Lot answered, “No, please don’t make us do that, sir. 19 You have done me a great favour and saved my life. But the hills are too Far away; the disaster will overtake me, and I will die before I get there. 20 Do you see that little town? It is near enough. Let me go over there you can see it is just a small place-and I will be safe.”

21 He answered, “All right, I agree. I won’t destroy that town. 22 Hurry! Run! I can’t do anything until you get there.”

Because Lot called it smalt, the town was named Zoar.

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

23 The sun was rising when Lot reached Zoar. 24 Suddenly the LORD rained burning sulphur on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah 25 and destroyed them and the whole valley, along with alt the people there and everything that grew on the land. 26 But Lot’s wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

27 Early the next morning Abraham hurried to the place where he had stood in the presence of the LORD. 28 He looked down at Sodom and Gomorrah and the whole valley and saw smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a huge furnace. 29 But when God destroyed the cities of the valley where Lot was living, he kept Abraham in mind and allowed Lot to escape to safety.

2.2

APOCRYPHAL TALES

Karel Čapek

The Ten Righteous

And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know . . .

And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? . . .

And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes . . .

And Abraham answered and said . . . Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, if I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Gen. 18.20-33

And when he returned unto his place, Abraham called to his wife Sarah and said unto her: "Listen I have this from the most reliable source, but no one else must know. The Lord has decided to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins. He told me so Himself."

And Sarah said: "See, didn't I tell you long ago that this would happen? And when I told you about the goings-on there, you even stood up for them and shouted at me to hold my tongue. 'Don't meddle,' you said, 'what business is it of yours?' Now you see what I've been saying all along, and you had to wait to find out. When I was talking with Lot's wife the other day, I said, 'What's going to come of all this?' Do you think the Lord will destroy Lot's wife, too?"

And Abraham answered: "Ah, but that's the point. What I wanted to tell you is that, after a bit of pressure on my part, the Lord agreed to save Sodom and Gomorrah if He found fifty righteous there. But I got that knocked down to ten. That's why I called to you, so the two of us together could pick out ten righteous for the Lord."

And Sarah said: "You did right. Lot's wife is a friend of mine, and Lot is the Bon of your brother Haran. I'm not saying Lot's righteous - you know how he set his whole house against you - and don't go telling me again, Abraham, that that wasn't out of line, he's dealt very underhandedly with you, but he is your nephew, even if Haran didn't treat you like a blond brother should, still, he's one of the family."

And she spake further, saying: "Tel the Lord to spare Sodom. I'm not the kind of person who'd wish anyone harm. In fact it makes my legs wobbly just thinking of so many people losing their lives. Go and intercede with the Lord so He'll have mercy on them."

And Abraham answered unto her: "The Lord will have mercy if he finds ten righteous. I think we could advise Him as to who they are. Run through the names of all the people who live in Sodom and Gomorrah. There's no reason why we shouldn't help the Lord find ten righteous."

And Sarah said: "Nothing's easier than that. I could name twenty or fifty or even a hundred righteous. Lord knows I wouldn't hurt a soul. Well then, we've got Lot's wife and Lot, your nephew, even if he is deceitful and envious, but he's one of the family. That's two already."

To which Abraham said: "And their two daughters

Whereupon did Sarah say: "Don't even think about it. That older one, Jescha, is a shameless hussy. Haven't you noticed the way she waggles her bottom at you? Lot's wife said to me herself, 'Jescha gives me so much trouble, I'll be glad when she's married.' The younger one seems more modest. But if you think we should, then count both of them in."

And Abraham said: "So we've got four righteous already. Who else should we choose?"

Thus Sarah answered unto him: "If you count in the two girls, then you have to include the young men they're promised to, Jobab and Seboim."

But Abraham said: "What's gotten into you? Seboim, don't forget, is the son of old Dodanim. How can the son of a thief and usurer be righteous?"

To which did Sarah say: "Abraham, do it, please, for the sake of the family. Why shouldn't Melcha be promised to just as decent a man as that clothes-horse Jescha? Melcha's a good girl; at least she doesn't shake her behind at elderly relatives whom she ought to respect."

And Abraham answered: "All right, just as you say. So with Jobab and Seboim, then, we've got six righteous. Now all we have to do is find four more."

And Sarah said: "That'll be easy. Let's see, who else in Sodom is righteous?"

To which Abraham replied: "I'd say old Nachor is." And Sarah said: "I'm

surprised you'd mention him at all. Don't you know that he sleeps with heathen girls, even though he's an old man? Better to pick Sabatach, he's more righteous than Nachor."

Whereupon Abraham grew heated with anger, saying: "Sabatach is a perjurer and a worshipper of idols. Don't ask me to give his name to the Lord as one of the righteous. Better to pick Elmodad or Eliab, they're worthier."

To this Sarah said: "You mean you don't know that Eliab committed adultery with Elmodad's wife? If Elmodad was worth anything, he'd have thrown his wife, that slut, out on the streets where she belongs. But maybe you could propose Naman, who can't help himself because he's crazy."

And Abraham replied: "I won't propose Naman, but I will propose Melchiel."

And Sarah said: "If you propose Melchiel, I'll never speak to you again. Wasn't it Melchiel who made fun of you because you had a son by that whore Hagar, and not by me?"

Then did Abraham say: "I won't propose Melchiel. But what do you think, couldn't I count Ezron or Jachelel among the righteous?"

And Sarah answered, saying: "Jachelel is a libertine and Ezron runs around with Akkadian harlots."

And Abraham said: "will propose Ephraim."

And Sarah said: "Ephraim says that the plain of Mamre, where our flocks are pastured, belongs to him."

Thus replied Abraham: "Ephraim is unrighteous. I will propose Ahiram, son of Jasiel."

And Sarah said: "Ahiram is a friend of Melchiel. If you want to propose somebody, propose Nadab."

And Abraham replied: "Nadati is a miser. I'll propose Amram."

To this Sarah said: "Amram wanted to sleep with your whore, Hagar. I can't imagine what he saw in her. You'd do better with Asriel."

And Abraham said: "Asriel is a fancypants. I can't propose some bufoon to the Lord. What if I named Namuel? No, Namuel doesn't deserve it, either. I don't know why we should have Namuel, of all people."

Then spake Sarah, saying: "What do you have against Namuel? True, he's stupid, but he's pious."

And Abraham said: "So be it. Namuel is the seventh." To which Sarah said: "Wait, take Namuel off the list, he practices the sin of Sodom. Who else is there? Let me see if I can come up with some names: Kahat, Salfad, Itamar . . ."

Thus replied Abraham: "Put that idea right out of your head. Itamar is a liar, and as for Kahat and Salfad, aren't they both taking the side of that accursed Peleg? But surely you know some righteous women in Sodom. Please, try to think."

And Sarah said: "There aren't any."

At this Abraham grieved, saying: "What, are there not ten righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah, so that the Lord will spare these fair cities for their sakes?"

Whereupon Sarah said: "Go, Abraham, go again to the Lord, fall on your knees before His face, rend your garments and say: Lord, Lord, I and Sarah, my wife, beseech you with tears not to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins.

"And say to Him: Have mercy on these sinful people and be patient with them even now. Have mercy, Lord, and let them live. But do not ask of us, Lord, that we put forward the names of ten righteous from among all Thy people."

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