

Handout 1: Lesson 10

Chapters 18 and 19 should be viewed as a united narrative. The events of chapter 18 in the annunciation of a miraculous birth of Isaac are contrasted with the announcement of death and destruction for Sodom in chapter 19 in an alternating pattern:

- A. Arrival of the Lord at Abraham's tent
 - B. Abraham greets the visitors
 - C. Abraham's hospitality to the visitors
 - D. Announcement of the birth of Isaac
 - E. Sarah laughs
 - F. Abraham intercedes with God for Sodom
- A. Arrival of the Lord's messengers at Sodom
 - B. Lot greets the visitors
 - C. Lot's hospitality to the visitors
 - D. Announcement of the destruction of Sodom
 - E. Lot's sons-in-laws laugh
 - F. Lot intercedes with the messengers to allow him to go to Zoar

Laughter becomes a thread that links Genesis chapters 17, 18, 19, and 21:

1. Abraham laughed (Gen 17:17)
2. Sarah laughed (Gen 18:12)
3. God questioned Sarah's laughter (Gen 18:13)
4. Sarah denied laughing (Gen 18:15)
5. Lot's sons-in-law laughed* (Gen 19:14).
6. Sarah comments on God causing her to laugh (Gen 21:6a).
7. Sarah declares that all who hear of Isaac's birth will laugh with her (Gen 21:6b)
8. Ishmael laughed* with Isaac (Gen 21:9).

* = literal translation. Isaac's name means "he laughed." There is a word-play on Isaac's name and the Hebrew word for "to laugh" (*saheq/ tsachaq*) in Genesis 18:12-15 and 21:6. In Gen 21:9 the Hebrew word is "laughter" (*me-saheq*, from Hebrew root "to laugh"); however, in the context of 21:9 this kind of "laughter" is understood to be mocking or malevolent (*Brown-Driver-Briggs*, page 850; *Waltke* page 274, 294).

Lot's series of bad decisions led to his downfall. Four decisions identified Lot more and more with Sodom and the final three decisions led to Lot's disgrace (for a total of seven)?

1. Choosing to move east toward Sodom—away from Abram and God (Gen 13:11)
2. Camping near Sodom (Gen 13:12)
3. Living in Sodom (Gen 14:12)
4. Returning to Sodom after his liberation from the Mesopotamians (Gen 19:1, 6)
5. In the destruction of Sodom he refused to obey the angel's command to flee to the hills in the direction of Abraham (Gen 19:18-23)
6. Instead of returning to Abraham, he settled in a cave in the hill country (Gen 19:30)
7. He became drunk and incestuously fathered Moab and Ammon (Gen 19:31-38)