

me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you please; but do not do anything to these men, since they have come under the shelter of my roof.”<sup>9</sup> But they said, “Stand back! The fellow,” they said, “came here as an alien, and already he acts the ruler! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” And they pressed hard against the person of Lot, and moved forward to break the door.<sup>10</sup> But the men stretched out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.<sup>11</sup> And the people who were at the entrance of the house, young and old, they struck with blinding light, so that they were helpless to find the entrance.

<sup>12</sup> Then the men said to Lot, “Whom else have you here? Sons-in-law, your sons and daughters, or anyone else that you have in the city—bring them out of the place.”<sup>13</sup> For we are about to destroy this place; because the outcry against them before the LORD has become so great that the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”<sup>14</sup> So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, “Up, get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city.” But he seemed to his sons-in-law as one who jests.

<sup>15</sup> As dawn broke, the angels urged Lot on,

woman is considered married, although the marriage has not been sexually consummated. The violator of such a woman incurs the death penalty. This is true in ancient Near Eastern law codes as well.

**9. The fellow** Literally, “the one,” a remark laden with contempt. Lot is being reminded that he is a stranger, without legal rights and protection, entirely dependent on the goodwill of the local community.

**11. blinding light** A sudden, immobilizing, blazing flash of light.

#### THE DELIVERANCE OF LOT AND HIS FAMILY (vv. 12–16)

**12. Sons-in-law** They list possible relatives, not only Lot's immediate family.

אִישׁ אוֹצִיָּאָה־נָא אֶתְהֶן אֲלֵיכֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם רַק לֹא־נָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־תַּעֲשׂוּ דָבָר כִּי־עַל־פָּנָי בָּאוּ בְּצֶל קִרְתִּי: <sup>9</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ | גִּשְׁהֶלָּאָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֶחָד בְּאֶלְגֹּר וַיִּשְׁפֹּט שְׁפוֹט עִתָּה נָרַע לָהֶן מֵהֶם וַיַּפְצְרוּ בְּאִישׁ בְּלוֹט מְאֹד וַיִּגְשׁוּ לְשֹׁבֵר הַדֶּלֶת: <sup>10</sup> וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֶת־יָדָם וַיִּבְיִאוּ אֶת־לוֹט אֲלֵיהֶם הַבַּיְתָּה וְאֶת־הַדֶּלֶת סָגְרוּ: <sup>11</sup> וְאֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־פָּתַח הַבַּיִת הֵכּוּ בַּסִּנּוּרִים מִקֶּטֶן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל וַיִּלְאוּ לְמַצָּא הַפֶּתַח:

<sup>12</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֶל־לוֹט עַד מִי־לָךְ פֹּה חֵתֶן וּבְנֵיךָ וּבְנֵי־יָדְךָ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־לָךְ בָּעִיר הוֹצֵא מִן־הַמָּקוֹם: <sup>13</sup> כִּי־מִשְׁחָתִים אֲנַחְנוּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי־גִדְלָה צַעֲקָתָם אֶת־פָּנַי יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁלַחְנוּ יְהוָה לְשַׁחֲתָהּ: <sup>14</sup> וַיֵּצֵא לוֹט וַיְדַבֵּר | אֶל־חֲתָנָיו | לֵקְחֵי בְנֹתָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ קוֹמוּ צֵאוּ מִן־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי־מִשְׁחָתִית יְהוָה אֶת־הָעִיר וַיְהִי כַּמֶּצְחָק בְּעֵינֵי חֲתָנָיו:

<sup>15</sup> וַיִּכְמוּ הַשָּׁחַר עָלָהּ וַיֹּאצִּצוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים בְּלוֹט לֵאמֹר קוּם קַח אֶת־אִשְׁתְּךָ וְאֶת־

**13. the outcry** The guilt of the city is now beyond all doubt, and its punishment is inevitable.

**14. went out** To where his intended sons-in-law lived.

**who had married** This rendering, which is that of the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation), assumes that Lot had two married daughters in the city.

**as one who jests** Their lack of seriousness reveals their insensitivity to the moral evil about them.

**15. two remaining daughters** Literally, “your two daughters who are here.”

saying, "Up, take your wife and your two remaining daughters, lest you be swept away because of the iniquity of the city." <sup>16</sup>Still he delayed. So the men seized his hand, and the hands of his wife and his two daughters—in the LORD's mercy on him—and brought him out and left him outside the city. <sup>17</sup>When they had brought them outside, one said, "Flee for your life! Do not look behind you, nor stop anywhere in the Plain; flee to the hills, lest you be swept away." <sup>18</sup>But Lot said to them, "Oh no, my lord! <sup>19</sup>You have been so gracious to your servant, and have already shown me so much kindness in order to save my life; but I cannot flee to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. <sup>20</sup>Look, that town there is near enough to flee to; it is such a little place! Let me flee there—it is such a little place—and let my life be saved." <sup>21</sup>He replied, "Very well, I will grant you this favor too, and I will not annihilate the town of which you have spoken. <sup>22</sup>Hurry, flee there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Hence the town came to be called Zoar.

<sup>23</sup>As the sun rose upon the earth and Lot entered Zoar, <sup>24</sup>the LORD rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulfurous fire from the LORD

שְׁתֵּי בָנָתָיו הַנִּמְצָאֹת פֶּן־תִּסָּפֵה בְּעֵינֵי הָעִיר: <sup>16</sup>וַיִּתְּמָהּ וַיִּחְלְקוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים בְּיָדוֹ וּבְיַד־אִשְׁתּוֹ וּבְיַד שְׁתֵּי בָנָתָיו בְּחִמְלַת יְהוָה עָלָיו וַיִּצְאָהוּ וַיִּנְחָהוּ מִחוּץ לָעִיר: <sup>17</sup>וַיְהִי כִּהְיוּצִיָּאם אֹתָם הַחוּצָה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמַּלְט עַל־נַפְשָׁךְ אֶל־תִּבֵּיט אַחֲרֶיךָ וְאַל־תַּעֲמֹד בְּכָל־הַפֶּכֶךְ הַהֲרָה הַמַּלְט פֶּן־תִּסָּפֵה: <sup>18</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹט אֲלֵהֶם אֶל־נָא אֲדֹנָי: <sup>19</sup>הִנֵּה־נָא מָצָא עֲבֹדְךָ חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וַתַּגִּדְלִי חֲסִדָּךְ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי לְהַחְיֹת אֶת־נַפְשִׁי וְאַנְכִּי לֹא אוֹכֵל לְהַמְלִיט הַהֲרָה פֶּן־תִּדְבָּקֵנִי הָרָעָה וּמָתִי: <sup>20</sup>הִנֵּה־נָא הָעִיר הַזֹּאת קְרִיבָה לָנוּס שָׁמָּה וְהִיא מִצְעָר אֲמַלְטָהּ נָא שָׁמָּה הֲלֹא מִצְעָר הוּא וַתְּחִי נַפְשִׁי: <sup>21</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הִנֵּה נִשְׁאֲתִי פָנֶיךָ גַּם לְדַבֵּר הַזֶּה לְבִלְתִּי הַפְּכִי אֶת־הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ: <sup>22</sup>מַהֵר הַמַּלְט שָׁמָּה כִּי לֹא אוֹכֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת דְּבָר עַד־בֹּאֲךָ שָׁמָּה עַל־פֶּן קָרָא שֵׁם־הָעִיר צוֹעַר: <sup>23</sup>הַשָּׁמֶשׁ יָצָא עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְלוֹט בָּא צִעְרָה: <sup>24</sup>וַיַּהֲרֹה הַמֶּטֶר עַל־סֹדֶם וְעַל־

רביעי v. 23. סבירין ומטעין "יצאה"

**16. the LORD's mercy on him** The deliverance of Lot is an act of divine grace, as verse 29 indicates.

**17. Do not look behind you** Do not linger. **the hills** The highlands of Moab.

**18. my lord** This translation takes the Hebrew word *adonai* here as a nonsacred term. Some commentators read it as a plural: "my lords" or "sirs." Others understand it as a direct plea to God.

**20. a little place** The Hebrew word translated as "a little place" (*mitz-ar*) is a play on the place-name *tzo-ar* (Zoar) in verse 22. It is intended to explain, by popular etymology, the

change in Zoar's name from the original Bela (14:2).

#### THE CATAclysm (vv. 23–29)

The passage contains traces of historical memory that the region was affected by earthquakes. Evidently, one of the last earthquakes had shaped the lower Jordan Valley region by allowing heat and gases to escape from the earth. Lightning then ignited the sulfur and bitumen that were there, obliterating everything in the area. According to geologic studies, this took place long before the age of Abraham.

**24. the LORD . . . the LORD** The repetition

**15. lest you be swept away** "Once destruction begins, it does not discriminate between

the righteous and the wicked" (*Seikhel Tov*).