

**Pillar of Salt**      Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time      Tuesday, July 2, 2019      **Gn**  
**19:15-29;**    Mt 8:23-27    (If we want to be saved, we have to be on the right path with our eyes  
focused on the goal, which is of course Christ.)

So today we are continuing the Book of Genesis and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which I mentioned yesterday was an ancient legend even at the time of Abraham, surely at the time the Book of Genesis was being written. So geologists think about 3000 BC there was some sort of cataclysm in the plains of Jericho involving massive destruction, the result of which the whole area now is an arid waste. Previously it had been quite fertile. So this is **one of those moments of great climactic change. The writer of Genesis wants to rewrite the story, the legend, to make it a moral story** and one that brings in and highlights the role of Abraham, even though he wasn't living at that time, namely **the role of Abraham as interceding for the well-being of others.**

Now you will notice that the ancient writers were unaware of how things like, for example, fire and brimstone really come into reality; they don't come down from the sky. Fire and brimstone, which is sulfur, comes up from below the earth; it's in the earth and it comes up through volcanic activity and various forms of earthquake.

What I want to go back to today is the bargaining, if you will, of Abraham with God. "Will you destroy the whole city if only fifty are just?" "Well, no." "What about forty-five? What about forty? What about thirty-five?" and so on. This is the point because he stops after ten. He said, "Would you destroy the city if there were ten just men?" And God said, "No." So there weren't even ten. The point being that **when evil propagates itself it leads to destruction.**

Now it's true the ancient people thought of this as something that actually God did, but in truth **it isn't something God does so much as it is the consequence of evil, that societies that don't strive for right order and justice and principle disintegrate.** They do pull apart, and we see this in our own society; we see it in many societies throughout history, actually.

Now taking on this idea of ten just men, we go to the prophet Jeremiah and Ezekiel, both. They both say that if only one just man lived in Jerusalem, it would not be destroyed—one. **Isaiah says that through the suffering of one just man, “suffering servant of God,” many will be redeemed.** So this is the idea of **intercession and mediation that of course we rightly see in Christ.** So he is the just one who has come to preserve and redeem the whole of life. Now this of course **requires cooperation**, the cooperation of humanity, but it is now possible because **we will not be swept away as long as we are on our way.**

Now Lot’s wife, you will remember, turned back. There are many different biblical warnings about turning back, looking back. **If we want to be saved, we have to be on the right path with our eyes focused on the goal, which is of course Christ,** who is both Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. When we let our focus revert to something else, our growth stops. What is a pillar of salt? Salt is crystal. Crystals grow to a point and then they stop. They are not really alive. Well that can happen to people. **People are going to appear to grow for a while and then stop, not really being alive. That’s the fate described as a pillar of salt.**