

## Living Righteously in Times of Wickedness

The purpose of Sunday School is to inspire class members to learn, teach, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ every day.

The wickedness seen in our day has often been compared to that of the days of Noah and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Studying the examples of Noah, Abraham, and Lot can help us learn how to live righteously in times of great wickedness.

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### Prepare

As you study [Genesis 6, 13–14](#), and [18–19](#), consider asking yourself:

- What am I doing to increase righteousness in the world? How has the Lord blessed my efforts? How will my efforts make me a more effective witness of this principle as a teacher?
- What could class members do to learn from the examples of Noah, Abraham, Lot, and others in the scriptures?
- What are class members doing to live righteous lives and raise righteous families? What are members of my class doing to limit the effects of the world in their families? What could they do to encourage and support one another in these efforts?
- How will I inspire class members to learn, teach, and live this doctrine in the coming week?

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### Encourage personal and family scripture study

Each week you have the opportunity to encourage class members to have meaningful scripture study, individually and with their families. For instance, you could do one of the following:

- Invite a class member to explain a strategy he or she uses to study the scriptures (see “Basic Scripture Study Strategies”). As part of this discussion, you could spend a few minutes showing class members some of the resources the Church has provided to help them with their gospel study, such as the General Conference section of [LDS.org](http://LDS.org) ([conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org)), which includes text, video, and audio files of several years of conference talks.
- Invite class members to share how they have acted on impressions they received during a previous class or during their personal scripture study.
- Ask class members to share and explain verses in [Genesis 13–14](#), and [18–19](#) that they find particularly meaningful. You may invite several members to prepare for this ahead of time by assigning them specific scripture passages to read. This activity could take the majority of the time in class.

#### Teaching in the Savior’s Way

The Savior encouraged those He taught to think about the scriptures for themselves and use them to find answers to their own questions. How will those you teach be blessed as they learn how to find answers to the questions they have about the gospel?

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### Learn together and invite to act

Follow the guidance of the Spirit as you select one or more of these activities or create your own based on the needs of your class.

- **How can we protect our families from wickedness?**  
Consider inviting a small group of youth or young adults to share briefly with your class some of the challenges they face in striving to live righteously even when others around them are not. They could also share ways that their families have helped them overcome unwholesome influences. Class members also could review [Genesis 6:1–8](#) and [Moses 8:17–30](#) and share words or phrases they would use to describe the world Noah lived in. What can we do to protect our families from wicked influences? Where can we find spiritual refuge, as Noah’s family found refuge in the ark? You might invite class members to discuss counsel they have received recently from Church leaders that has helped them and their families to remain steadfast.
- **What does Abraham’s example teach us about turning away from wickedness?**  
Class members could read [Genesis 14:8–24](#), in which Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom are captured in battle and then rescued by Abraham. They could look for and discuss what they learn from Abraham’s

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responses to Melchizedek and to the king of Sodom. To help class members liken the scriptures to themselves, consider asking how decisions we face are similar to the decisions Abraham faced when he had two opportunities: whether to pay tithing and whether to take the spoils of war. What can we learn from Abraham's response to the king of Sodom that can help us when we face similar decisions? (See [verses 21–23](#).) Consider inviting class members to share experiences in which they have chosen to reject worldly things to follow the Lord.

- **What are the consequences of “pitching our tent toward Sodom”?**

Before class, you could ask a class member to come prepared to briefly summarize the events in [Genesis 13](#). As a class, you could discuss the choice Lot made to pitch “his tent toward Sodom” ([verse 12](#)). The statement by Elder L. Tom Perry in “Additional learning resources” (below) could add to this discussion. What things do we sometimes do that are, in a spiritual sense, like pitching our tents toward Sodom? To understand the consequences of such choices, the class could study [Genesis 19:4–28](#), silently or in small groups (you might also suggest that they read [Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 19:9–15](#) [in the Bible appendix]). What do we learn from this account (answers might include the importance of fleeing wickedness and not returning to past sins)? How could it apply to our own efforts to live righteously in times of increasing wickedness? To add to this discussion, you could share the statement by Elder Richard G. Scott in “Additional learning resources” (below).

- **What can we do to look to the future with faith and hope?**

You could invite the class to discuss the example of Lot's wife, as described in [Genesis 19:4–28](#). For example, they could discuss what it might mean to “look back,” as Lot's wife did. As part of this discussion, you could show the video “[Look Not behind Thee](#)” or refer to Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's article “[The Best Is Yet to Be](#)” (see “Additional learning resources,” below). What could we say to encourage someone who feels fearful about the wickedness in the world?

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### Learning and living the gospel every day

Encourage class members to think about what they have learned and felt today. What do they feel impressed to do? For instance, they could:

- Share with their families something from today's discussion.
- Continue studying this doctrine and act on what they learn.
- Look for scriptural examples of people who stayed true to their covenants despite wickedness around them. In a future class, you could invite them to share what they found.

During the coming week, you could send class members suggestions for home study from the additional learning resources at the end of the next outline you select. Encourage them to consider using one of the ideas listed under “Basic Scripture Study Strategies” or “Family Study Ideas” as they review these resources.

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### Additional learning resources

- [Ezekiel 16:48–50](#); [Jude 1:7](#) (sins of Sodom and Gomorrah)
- [Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:25–40](#) (in the Bible appendix); [Alma 13:15–19](#) (description of Melchizedek, King of Salem)
- [Alma 10:22–23](#); [62:40](#); [Helaman 13:12–14](#); [3 Nephi 12:13–16](#) (the influence of the righteous)
- [Luke 9:62](#); [17:29–32](#); [D&C 133:14–15](#) (counsel not to look back)
- President Boyd K. Packer, “[Do Not Fear](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 77–80
- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “[The Best Is Yet to Be](#),” *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 23–27
- Videos: “[Things of the World](#)” (1:19), “[No Other Gods](#)” (1:27), “[Look Not behind Thee](#)” (3:09)
- *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel*, 3rd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 66–68, 75–77
- Elder L. Tom Perry taught: “The Old Testament contains the account of Abraham taking Lot, his nephew, with him out of Egypt. Given a choice of land, Lot chose the plain of Jordan, and he pitched his tent facing Sodom, a city of great wickedness. (See [Genesis 13:1–12](#).) Most of the problems that Lot later encountered in his life, and

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there were several, can be traced back to his early decision to position the door of his tent to look upon Sodom” ([“The Power of Deliverance,”](#) *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 96–97).

- Elder Richard G. Scott said: “Sodom and Gomorrah was the epitome of unholy life in the Old Testament. It was isolated then; now that condition is spread over the world. Satan skillfully manipulates the power of all types of media and communication. His success has greatly increased the extent and availability of such degrading and destructive influences worldwide” (“[How to Live Well amid Increasing Evil,](#)” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 100).

### Additional insight

- Did Lot really offer his daughters to the wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah?  
The Joseph Smith Translation clarifies this account: “Lot said, Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; . . . ye shall not do unto them as seemeth good in your eyes” ([Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 19:13](#) [in the Bible appendix]).

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