

# Weekly Word

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By Mary Ruth Stone

## Devotion

### The Fire of God in Judgment

Fire is a prominent element in scripture representing the presence and power of Almighty God. The first time the word "fire" is used in scripture is at the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24). The second time fire is mentioned is when Abraham took his son Isaac up Mount Moriah. "So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together" (Genesis 22:6). Throughout scripture God manifested Himself in many ways. One of the most awesome was by fire.

Fire is extremely important to human beings. It is important for food preparation, for sure. It is important in the manufacture of many of the goods that we use. But fire also can be destructive. People sometimes lose their possessions and even their lives in fire. Such fires are usually accidental.

The first mention of fire in scripture described a deliberate act of God intended to judge and punish sin. He destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by raining down fire and brimstone. Since that time the names of these two cities have been synonymous with sin, especially sexual immorality. Peter wrote: ". . . making them an example of those who afterward would live ungodly. . ." (2 Peter 2:6). Yet, Jesus said that the failure of a city to receive His disciples would incur such wrath ". . . that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city" (Luke 10:12).

The comforting part of the story of Sodom's judgment by fire is that along with God's judgment came mercy. There was a man whom 2 Peter 2:7 refers to as "righteous" whose name was Lot. Angels were sent by God to remove Lot and his family from Sodom before the fire fell. Lot and his two daughters made it out of the city safely.

God is *just* and His judgment is as fire. Yet, God is also *merciful* and extends His hand to save those who will accept.

## Scripture

"Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace"

(Genesis 19:28).

## This 'n That

*"God left His throne at the center of the universe. He set aside His glory, and He humbled Himself as He took on human flesh . . . His own death satisfied His own judgment for sin, and we are saved. Hallelujah! What a Savior!"*

*—Anne Graham Lotz*

## Prayer

Thank You, God, for mercy!  
Amen.

Forgiven,  
Mary Ruth