ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

LOT AS SUPPORTING CHARACTER:

THE LOT-ABRAHAM RELATIONSHIP IN THE NARRATIVE OF SODOM

AND GOMORRAH (GENESIS 18–19)

A Thesis Presented to

The Faculty of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Theology

(Biblical Studies—Old Testament)

By

TSUNEKI TOYODA

TAYTAY, RIZAL

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ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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TSUNEKI TOYODA

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Dr. Mitchel Modine		Dr. J. Stephen Fountain	
Thesis Advisor	Date	Outside Reader	Date
Dr. Darin Land		Dr. Dick Eugenio	
Faculty Reader	Date	Faculty Reader	Date
Dr. Phillip Davis		Dr. Dick Eugenio	
Program Director	Date	Academic Dean	Date

Dr. Larry Bollinger

President   Date

To my beloved wife, Kyoko,
for your patience, love, and humor.

And also my precious children, Kinomi, Miwako, Miki, and Isami,
for your prayers, encouragement, and smiles.

ABSTRACT

Lot plays a significant role as a supporting character in his relationship with

Abraham, specifically in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19). The

researcher employed narrative criticism, focusing on stories in Biblical literature through

the stylistic and aesthetic literary structure the author designed, and approaching these

stories with insights drawn from the secular field of modern literary criticism. This

methodology aims at determining the effect that the narrative texts are expected to have

on their reader and thereby reconstructing the meaning.

The study justified the significance of Lot's role as supporting character in his

relationship with Abraham in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19) as

follows: Lot's autonomous and active actions as a principal character, as a result, bore

testimony for (1) the efficacy of Abraham's intercession with the LORD (18:23–32), (2)

the fact that Abraham had already commanded Lot "to keep the way of the LORD by

doing righteousness and justice" (18:19), and (3) a partial of fulfillment of God's promise

with Abraham (18:19 [cf. 12:3], "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him").

The author, through such dramatic irony, represented the significance of Lot's role as a

supporting character.

This study includes recommendations for future related studies from narrative

criticism as follows: (1) Sarah's role as a supporting character, (2) patriarchal supporting

characters' role, (3) Pentateuchal supporting characters' role, and (4) the role of each

supporting character in the Old Testament in the narrative.

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DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

TSUNEKI TOYODA	July 23, 2020
(Researcher)	(Date)

ABBREVIATIONS

Biblical Texts

BHS *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*

ESV *English Standard Version*

Dictionaries and Lexicon

DOT:P *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Edited by T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

DOT:Pr *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*. Edited by Mark J. Boda and Gordon J. McConville. Downers Grove, IL; Nottingham, England: IVP Academic; Inter-Varsity Press, 2012

NIDOTTE *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Edited by Willem. A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997

TDOT *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974–2006

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The book of Genesis, as a literary form, is mostly constructed of narrative. In this narrative, the cast includes both main and supporting characters according to the plot. In the Hebrew Bible, the principal main character is God, although He both appears on the scene and hides Himself. Human beings also appear as main characters, whether protagonists or antagonists, and are portrayed as obedient or disobedient to God in the Biblical text.

Genesis 12–50 is the patriarchal narrative with four main characters, namely, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Each of the patriarchal characters has stood, not by himself, but through interactions with supporting characters in the surrounding narrative.

For example, each of the patriarch's wives serve as a supporting character, playing a significant role for the fulfillment of the promises of God to multiply their descendants in the covenant. The story of Abraham, the very first father of the patriarchal period, is developed in relationship to his barren wife, Sarah, who gives birth to an heir for Abraham. This is also true of Isaac's wife Rebecca and Jacob's wife Rachel.

The author of Genesis 12–50 selects many kinds of characters as supporting

characters to develop the plot with the patriarchal main characters. They play the roles of

protagonists and antagonists in the plot. For example, in the story of Joseph, his brothers,

especially Judah, play a significant role as antagonists against Joseph, while Jacob,

Potiphar, and Pharaoh function as protagonists standing on the side of Joseph.

The author communicates his message to the reader through the narrative

developed in the relationship of the main characters with the supporting ones.[1] For

example, the author brings a significant message of reconciliation into the story of Joseph

and his brothers (Genesis 50).

Most Biblical study of Genesis has focused on the main characters in the

narrative. It is natural for Biblical scholars to examine the theological and ethical

significance of the main characters in the narrative because the author presents his

primary message to the reader through the main characters. However, would the author

consider the supporting characters and their relationships with the main character to be

largely irrelevant for the reader? If the supporting characters were significant in the

writing, how would they function in the narrative within the design of the literary

structure?

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[1] Mark Allan Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, Guides to Biblical Scholarship New Testament (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 19–20.

In Genesis 12–25, the author portrays Abraham as the principal character, while he also employs Sarah his wife and Lot his nephew as supporting characters for the development of the narrative. The author clarifies the significance of both Sarah and Lot as supporting characters from the beginning of the story of Abraham (11:26) through their frequent appearances.

The reader can recognize Sarah's significance as a supporting character in her relationship with Abraham, her husband in the narrative, because one of the main promises of God to Abraham through the covenant is to multiply his descendants for the purpose of blessing the nations (12:2–3).

On the other hand, even if the author portrays Lot as a supporting character from the beginning of the story of Abraham, how is this significant in the narrative? How does the author present Lot, who plays a significant role as a supporting character in the narrative, when juxtaposed with another supporting character—Sarah, for example?

Statement of the Problem

The researcher analyzes the role of Lot as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19). Therefore, this study primarily addresses the following question: What is the role of Lot as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham in the narrative of Sodom and

Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19)? The following sub-questions are employed to achieve the objective of answering the primary question:

Sub-Problems:

1. What is Lot's role as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham through his first to fourth appearances (Gen 11–14)? (Chapter 4)

The Abraham-Lot relationship is built up and established through turning points in their life: death of Lot's father, Haran (11:27–28); journey with his uncle, Abraham (12:4–5); separation from Abraham (13:1–14); capture in war and rescue by Abraham (14:12–16).

Investigating Lot's four appearances (Gen 11–14), the researcher notes Lot's role as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham and identifies the literary structural framework between Genesis 11–14 and 18–19.

Although Lot appears generally as a passive supporting character, the researcher analyzes Lot's initiative in selecting the Jordan Valley through the lens of literary devices: focalizations, time order, symbolism, and dramatic irony (13:10).

2. In Genesis 18, what is Lot's role as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham despite his absence? (Chapter 5)

The author portrays Abraham (and Sarah) and God as main characters without Lot's appearance in Genesis 18. The researcher notes Abraham as a covenantal counterpart with God (Gen 18:18–19) and as a prophet who pleads with God for salvation of the righteous in Sodom (18:21–33) including Lot, although Abraham saved Lot through his physical and military action in Genesis 14.

3. What is Lot's role as a supporting character as well as a main character in his relationship with Abraham in his final appearances (Gen 19)? (Chapter 6)

The author describes Lot as an active and autonomous character in Genesis 19.[2] Although investigating Lot's role as a main character, specifically a righteous person in his relationship with the angels, the Sodomites, the Zoarites, and his family in Genesis 19, the researcher notes that the author portrays through the dramatic irony in the literary structure that Lot as a supporting character bears testimony to Abraham's covenantal and prophetic roles (Gen 18).

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[2] Chatman insists on "characters as autonomous beings" and argues that "character is reconstructed by the audience" or the reader. Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 119.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it offers to the contemporary reader of the Hebrew

Bible a deeper appreciation for the effective literary structure designed stylistically and

aesthetically and the meaningful and impressive messages that the author communicates

to the reader through Lot's role as a supporting character in his relationship with

Abraham in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19).

As a result, research into the role of Lot as a supporting character explored the

following:

1. It examined the significance of how the literary structure was designed stylistically and

aesthetically in the development of the Abraham-Lot narrative (Genesis 18–19).

In researching Lot's role as a supporting character, the researcher analyzed the

stylistic and aesthetic design of the literary structure in terms of symmetrical

arrangements and literary techniques such as focalization (point of view), time order,

symbolism, and dramatic irony, since the author, through the literary structure, clarifies

where he is most interested and how he/she develops the Abraham-Lot narrative (Genesis

11–19). In this way, the researcher explored the significance of Lot's role as a supporting

character, specifically, in Genesis 18–19.

2. It examined the significance of Abraham's role as a prophet in his covenantal

relationship with God (Genesis 18).

In research into Lot's role as a supporting character, the researcher explored and

analyzed Abraham's intercession to God for salvation of the righteous in Sodom (18:23–

32), speaking in his intimate and trustworthy covenantal relationship with God (18:17–

21). Abraham's act of intercession, in a prophetic role of his covenantal relationship with

God assumes Lot is a righteous person, so that Lot is to be saved in the midst of the

destruction (Gen 19). Abraham stands before the Lord and engages in the rescue of Lot,

not as a warrior (Gen 14) but as a prophet through intercession (Gen 18). This makes

indirect reference to Lot as a supporting character through the voice of a principal

character. His salvation is dependent on the efficacy of Abraham's intercession, which

the reader can perceive moves God to deliver Lot and his family (Gen 19).

3. It examined the significance of Lot's positive and righteous behaviors and actions as a

main character (Genesis 19).

In research into Lot's role as a supporting character, the researcher studied and

analyzed Lot as a main character and his positive, righteous behaviors and actions toward

the angels, his sons-in-law, and the Zoarites (19:1–8, 14, 18–20, and 23). These, as a

result, bear testimony to the significance of Abraham's role as a prophet in his covenantal

relationship with God. The author, at this point, describes Lot as a supporting character as well as a main character in Genesis 19 with dynamic irony in the literary structure.

Scope and Delimitation

The researcher focuses on Lot's role as a supporting character in the literary narrative. Although the author portrays Lot as a foil of the principal character Abraham from the beginning of the narrative (11:27), Lot as a supporting character influences Abraham's action and speech within the plot.[3] Therefore the researcher explores Lot's role in his relationship with Abraham in the narrative.

Since the narrative consists of a plot arranged with sequential events, it is significant to study the literary structure in order to clarify the role of Lot in his relationship with Abraham.[4] Although it is not so frequent and outstanding in the narrative, the appearance of Lot indeed has a profound effect on the plot because of his relationship with Abraham. In Genesis 13, although the strife between the herdsmen of Lot and the herdsmen of Abram brought the separation in their relationship (vv. 1–13),

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[3] Berlin underlines the importance of "character contrasts" as a foil for interpretation. Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 136.

[4] Cotter insists on the significance of the literary structure with Dorsey and Walsh. See David W. Cotter, *Genesis*, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 83–87.

the author makes this event the opportunity for Abram to reconfirm the promise that God

shall give him a land and make him an heir to the covenant (vv. 14–18).

Furthermore, in Genesis 14, Lot is captured by Chedorlaomer and other kings (v.

12) while living in Sodom. Then Abram comes to his rescue (vv. 13–16). For this reason,

though the king of Sodom approaches and negotiates with Abram about giving him some

possessions, Abram does not accept it because of his faith in God (vv. 21–24). Then God

again reconfirms the promise of his offspring with Abram (15:1–5).

The author, finally, describes Lot not as supporting character but as an active and

main character in Genesis 19. On the other hand, the attentive reader notices that Lot's

speech and deeds in chapter 19 represent the efficacy of Abraham's command to keep the

way of the Lord (18:19), as well as his intercession (18:23–32). In this sense, Lot still

plays the role of supporting character for Abraham despite his central position in chapter

19.

Hence the author depicts Lot as an indispensable supporting character, whether he

is passive or active. It seems that the author's primary concern with regard to Lot is his

relationship with Abraham.[5] In this respect, the researcher attempts to clarify that Lot has

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[5] Abram's name is changed to Abraham in Gen 17.

played an effective and influential role in the plot in both literary and theological terms in

his relationship with Abraham in the literary narrative.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Aesthetic and Artistic Literary Structure in Genesis (Hermann Gunkel)

The researcher took narrative criticism as the methodology for this investigation

of Genesis 18–19, and focused on literary structure and arrangement of the Biblical texts

in the final form. Gunkel, a German scholar, highlighted the potential importance of

literary structure in the narrative of Genesis, although he investigated Genesis as legends

with general critical and historical considerations.[1]

Gunkel hypothesized that the Israelites, one of the civilized peoples of antiquity,

developed the book of Genesis with historical records based both on history proper and

popular tradition in naiver poetical fashion.[2] He contended that legends are not lies but

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[1] Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, trans. W. H. Carruth (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1901). This volume, in fact, was issued as an introductory part of his large commentary. Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997). Amit and Tolmie refer to Gunkel as a precursor of narrative criticism. Yairah Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, trans. Yael Lotan (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 11; Francois Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 2.

[2] History, according to Gunkel, is written form and a sort of scientific activity, and presupposes practice in writing. Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 4.

rather, a particular form of poetry as they in the Old Testament.[3] Furthermore, while

arguing the distinction between history and legend, Gunkel pointed to the significance of

the poetic tone of the narratives and mentioned,

> History, which claims to inform us of what has actually happened, is in its very nature prose, while legend is by nature poetry, its aim being to please, to elevate, to inspire and to move. He(/she) who wishes to do justice to such narratives must have some aesthetic faculty, to catch in the telling of a story what it is and what it purports to be. And in doing so he(/she) is not expressing a hostile or even skeptical judgment, but simply studying lovingly the nature of this material.[4]

From this point, Gunkel told evangelical churches and their chosen

representatives that they "would do well not to dispute the fact that Genesis contains

legends—as has been done too frequently—but to recognize that the knowledge of this

fact is the indispensable condition to an historical understanding of Genesis."[5]

Gunkel made a significant contribution to the investigation into the literary form

of the legends in Genesis. In fact, Gunkel remarked that scholars have not often turned

into the literary aspect, the aesthetics of the narrative, and said, "Scholars have more

rarely expressed appreciation of the beauty of these narratives, often perhaps for personal

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[3] Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 3. Gunkel mentioned that legend is oral, tradition of those who are not in the habit of writing and is not possible to be proved "from the point of view of our modern historical science, which is not a figment of imagination but is based upon the observation of facts." Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 8.

[4] Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 10–11.

[5] Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 12.

reasons, and perhaps often because the aesthetic point of view seemed to them

incompatible with the dignity of science."[6] And then he argued, "[O]ne who ignores the

artistic form of these legends not only deprives himself of a great pleasure, but is unable

properly to satisfy the scientific demands of the understanding of Genesis."[7] Moreover,

Gunkel pointed out, "Detailed investigations of the nature of this prose (narrative) have

not been carried on" and noted that the narrative in Genesis has consisted in the aesthetic

and stylistic literary structures and said, "this prose (narrative) is not the common

colloquial language of every-day life, but is more artistic in its composition and has some

sort of rhythmical construction."[8] In this way, Gunkel drew much attention to the

aesthetic and artistic literary form in Genesis.

Gunkel also made a hypothesis that popular traditions (legends) were transmitted

faithfully but transformed unconsciously in the course of the centuries. But he concluded

that "Only in the more recent modifications is it reasonable to assume the operation of

conscious art," and mentioned further, "[M]any of the legends, as will be shown later,

have such a marked artistic style that they can scarcely be regarded in this form as

products of the collective people."[9] In this way, Gunkel emphasized the literary artistry in

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[6] Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 37.
[7] Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 37.
[8] Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 38.
[9] For this reason, he assumed there was "a class of professional story-tellers" in Israel. Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 39–41.

the final form of the texts of Genesis, which the author or editors composed consciously and on purpose.

Gunkel also contended that the whole of the narratives may be analyzed by divisions and subdivision and their relation to one another and advised the modern reader to "heed the systematic arrangement of parts, since the analysis will at the same time give him the course of the action."[10] For this reason, Gunkel explored the characterization and speech, specifically laconism in the narratives of Genesis in detail.

Gunkel made an embryonic but significant contribution in the investigation into the aesthetics and artistry of the legends as poetry (narratives) during a time when historical criticism were dominant, and challenged his contemporary Christians to explore the legends from such literary perspective. While not adopting his critical and historical approach to Genesis due to a choice to employ narrative criticism, which focuses on the Biblical texts in the final form, the researcher attempted to explore the aesthetic and artistic literary structure and arrangement in the narratives in Genesis in agreement with Gunkel's literary approach.

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[10] Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 48–49. Furthermore, Gunkel explored the characterization, the speech, specifically laconism, and repetition in the narratives of Genesis in detail. Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 53–72. Finally he argued history of the development of the legends of Genesis in oral tradition, represented as Jahvist, Elohist, and Jehovist collection, and Priestly codex.

The Analysis of Literary Structure and Arrangement (David A. Dorsey)

The researcher paid much attention to the analysis of the literary structure as a guide for the reader to the interest and emphasis of the author and as a carrier of its meanings or messages in the texts. Dorsey made a significant contribution to the investigation and methodology of literary structure and arrangement in the Old Testament, which bring the meanings and messages to the reader.

Dorsey argues the significance of the analyzing the literary structure in the Old Testament in his commentary and declared "The pages of the Old Testament reflect a keen interest in literary structure. Hebrew authors and editors generally took great pains to arrange their compositions in ways that would help convey their messages."[11]

Dorsey asserts that the ancient authors were mindful of the structure of their compositions, which had more rigorous structural patterns than our modern books. This is because, according to many linguistic studies of various unwritten tribal languages, aurally oriented compositions generally feature sophisticated structural patterns. Since the ancient texts were written primarily to be heard, not seen, an ancient writer could not help but use structural signals that would be perceptible to the listening audience.[12]

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[11] David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 15.

[12] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 15–16.

Dorsey says that the analysis of a composition's structure is "simply to identify and explain the composition's internal organization (i.e., its layout or arrangement)," and presents three steps for this analysis: (1) identifying the composition's constituent parts ("units"), (2) analyzing the arrangement of those parts, and (3) considering the relationship of the composition's structure (layout or arrangement) to its meaning and message.[13]

Dorsey, in the third step, mentioned, "The organization of a literary work contributes to and is an integral part of the work's meaning. To put it differently, a composition's layout generally reflects the author's main focus, points of emphasis, agenda, etc., and accordingly represents an important avenue to better understand the author's meaning."[14] This is represented in this present study. The researcher, therefore, paid much attention to the literary structure of Genesis 18–19 to find the author's interest or emphasis and the meaning and message in the narrative.

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[13] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 16. Dorsey, accepting that subjectivity cannot be entirely eliminated in identifying literary units, introduced several guidelines to minimize the problems: (1) Objective markers, (2) External cues and internal cohesion, (3) Multiple indicators, (4) Bracketing, (5) Perceptibility to ancient audience, and (6) Compatibility in overall context. See Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 24–25.

[14] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 17.

Dorsey argues that three basic patterns of the arrangement occur throughout the

Hebrew Bible: linear [a-b-c-d]; parallel [a-b-c || a'-b'-c'] or variations; and symmetric [a-

b-c || c'-b'-a' or a-b-c-b'-a'], and remarks especially on the latter two.[15] The researcher

identified and analyzed both the parallel and symmetric patterns in Genesis 18–19.

All parallel and symmetric patterns, according to Dorsey, have one important

feature in common: their structures are created by the matching of units. "Any sort of

repetition can link matching units as long as the repetition is enough for the audience to

catch and is unique to the two matching units."[16]

In the analysis of the arrangement of units, Dorsey points out three common

methodological errors generally found in *forced chiasmus* and *parallel schemes,* which

are usually accompanied by misidentifications of units: (1) *Creative titling*, whereby units

are made to match by the imaginative wording of their assigned titles; (2) *Illegitimate*

word-linking, whereby units are seen to match based on the insignificant occurrence of

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[15] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 27. Dorsey points out two advantages in the parallel pattern: (1) Its repetitiveness makes it easier to remember, both for the speaker and for the audience; (2) Its repetitions provide an opportunity to do such things as compare, contrast, reiterate, emphasize, explain, and illustrate. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 28-30. He also mentioned that the symmetric pattern has several compelling advantages such as beauty, coherence, sense of completeness, central pivot, memory aid, and opportunities to exploit the repetitions. See Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 30–31.

[16] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 32. Dorsey provided some techniques used to link matching units in the Hebrew Bible. See Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 32–33.

one or more relatively common words in both units—words that may also occur

elsewhere in the context; (3) *Illegitimate theme-linking*, whereby two units are artificially

linked by "discovering" in both units a significant mutually shared theme (or motif) that

in reality is either concocted or else insignificant because of its commonality.[17]

In analysis of the relationship of the book's structure to its meaning, Dorsey

highlights three primary methods which Hebrew writers used to help communicate their

messages: (1) the composition's overall structure, (2) structured repetition (the matching

of units), and (3) positions of prominence.[18] While focusing on the analysis of the

structure in Genesis 18–19, the researcher, due to the composition's overall structure of

the narrative which represented the Lot-Abraham relationship, also examined Genesis

11–14 since the research itself is related to the relationship between Abraham and Lot.

Dorsey states that the advantage of using structured repetition to communicate meaning

is:

> It enables an author to make a point subtly, without explicitly saying it, and such
> subtlety is appreciated by an audience. Most people do not like to be preached at,
> and they quickly tire of pontifications. But conveyance of meaning subtly is less
> obtrusive and more enjoyable. It involves the listeners in the discovery of

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[17] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 33–34.

[18] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 36.

meaning, inviting them to participate, to think. This, in turn, makes the listening process more interesting, pleasurable, and in the end more effective.[19]

Dorsey, in this way, emphasizes the significance of the role of the audience/reader's involvement and participation in the identification and analysis of the structured repetition. The researcher, therefore, paid much attention to the subtle characteristics of structured repetition in the study of Genesis 18–19. Dorsey emphasizes that it is significant to identify the positions of prominence (the central units) in a text and then consider the possible significance of those highlighted positions.[20]

His great but difficult enterprise to analyze the literary structure and find the meaning of whole books of the Hebrew Bible is worthwhile and admirable, while Dorsey, as he himself recognizes, left questions unanswered or even unasked. In his questions or expectations, Dorsey calls for further analysis of the structures of the smaller units, which, for the most part, remain unexplored. Furthermore, Dorsey accepts he had missed other common structuring conventions (patterns) to be identified in the Hebrew Bible and mentions, "These other structuring patterns and techniques need to be

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[19] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 37. Dorsey presented various subtle ways, in which Hebrew writers used the matching of units to convey or reinforce meaning: (1) Emphasis, (2) Highlighting a pattern, (3) Comparison, (4) Contrast, (5) Reversal, (6) Reciprocity, (7) Resolution (or fulfillment), and (8) Totality. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 38–39.

[20] Dorsey provided four important roles for the use of the central units of symmetric schemes: (1) Turning point, (2) Climax, (3) Centerpiece, and (4) Significant pause (or interlude). Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 40–41.

identified, their functions analyzed, and their usages in specific Old Testament passages

investigated."[21] The researcher, therefore, attempted to investigate the smaller units in

Genesis in this study and to identify the structural (and literary) patterns and techniques

in the narrative of Genesis 18–19, in which the relationship between Abraham and Lot

culminate starting from Genesis 11.[22]

The Theme of Genesis in the Pentateuch (David Clines)

The researcher assumed that the book of Genesis has the theme which Clines

proposed in *The Theme of the Pentateuch*. Clines, adding his reflection in the second

edition issued after twenty years, declared that it had been "a hybrid of rhetorical

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[21] Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 327.

[22] Dorsey criticized his contemporary commentators for striving much to clarify the verbal content of passages of scripture but taking relatively little heed of the arrangement of this content. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*, 328. The researcher would also note the further study of the literary structure and arrangement in the narrative of the Old Testament by Walsh. Jerome T. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001).

criticism and Biblical theology" and furthermore written from the perspective of

narratology (narrative criticism), which is true of this study.[23]

Clines attempted to define the theme of the Pentateuch in a survey of the unity of

the Pentateuch not in origin, but in its final form, although sought in the Pentateuch's

sources rather than in the final product.[24] He tried to express the theme as perceived "by a

person who has never seen a printed Hebrew Pentateuch" as well as "by the competent

Hebraist or textual critic."[25]

Clines observed the progression throughout the Pentateuch and its impetus in Gen

12:1–3 (summarized as the promises of posterity, of a relationship with God, and of land,

all of which also are found in Genesis),[26]and defined the theme of the Pentateuch as

follows:

> The theme of the Pentateuch is the partial fulfilment—which implies also the
> partial non-fulfilment—of the promise to or blessing of the patriarchs. The

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[23] David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, vol. 10, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1997), 128. Clines admitted that *The Theme of the Pentateuch* already had taken a first step in the postmodern move away from the modern view of meaning. While representing "the interests of the modern period, in which texts have unity and determinate meaning, and in which texts are to be viewed as the expression of their author's consciousness," Clines also argued the meaning of the texts from the postmodern view that "(T)exts do not have meaning in themselves, and that what we call meaning is something that comes into being at the meeting point of text and reader. If that is so, then meaning is reader-dependent and reader-specific, and there are in principle as many meanings as there are readers." In this way, Clines sought the location of meaning "in an interaction between the reader or interpreter and the text." Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:131. As a result, he also accepted postmodern Biblical criticism from feminist and political perspectives. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:133–137.

[24] Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:5.

[25] Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:13.

[26] Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:27–29.

promise or blessing is both the divine initiative in a world where human initiatives always lead to disaster, and are an affirmation of the primal divine intentions for humanity.[27]

Clines in this theme emphasizes the three elements (posterity, divine-human relationship, and land) which have mutuality with each other. He says, "For the triple elements are unintelligible one without the other, never strongly differentiated one from another in their manifestation in the text, and each, in the accumulative effect, with the implication of the others."[28] Although Clines observes that the promise of progeny predominates in Genesis, the researcher investigated the partial fulfillment of the promise of blessing of the nations in Genesis 19.[29]

Clines summarizes three themes in Genesis 1–1, namely, the sin—speech—mitigation—punishment pattern; the spread-of-sin, spread-of-grace theme; and the creation—uncreation—re-creation theme.[30] He then combines them and describes what

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[27] Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:30. Clines asserts that the theme of a narrative work is as follows: (1) A conceptualization of its plot, or plot with the emphasis on conceptualized meaning; (2) The central or dominating idea in a literary work; (3) A rationale of the content, structure and development of the work in terms of the work itself in its final form; (4) It functions as follows: (a) An orientation to the work, which makes a proposal about how best to approach the work; (b) A warning or protest against large-scale misunderstanding of a work; (c) Evidence that the work is coherent or systematic; (d) The first step in formulating the message of the work within its historical context or in setting up guidelines within which future readings or interpretations of the work in different historical contexts may be considered legitimate; (5) Approached by way of an attempt to distinguish it from similar terms: 'intention', 'motif', 'subject', and so on. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:19–21.

[28] Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:31.

[29] Clines also observed that the promise of the relationship of God and Israel has predominated in Exodus and Leviticus and the promise of the land in Numbers and Deuteronomy. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:48–65.

[30] Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:61–82.

he sees as the theme of primeval history: (a) Humankind tends to destroy what God has

made good; (b) No matter how drastic human sin becomes, destroying what was made

good and bringing the world to the brink of uncreation, God's grace never fails to deliver

humankind from the consequences of their sin.[31] Clines, thereupon, attempts to connect

the primeval and patriarchal history, arguing, "In the final form of Genesis, therefore,

there is at no point a break" between them,[32] and concludes that "The patriarchal (or,

Pentateuchal) narratives can then function as the 'mitigation' (grace) element of the

Babel story (Gen 11:1–9), and what is more, the divine promise to the patriarchs then

demands to be read in conjunction with Genesis 1—as a re-affirmation of the divine

intentions for humanity."[33] In this respect, Genesis 1–11 can be recognized as

preparation, bringing the reader to the divine grace response to human destruction of

what God created good, while the promise of God to Abraham and his descendants as

response to His own grace can be described as partially fulfilled in Genesis 12–50.

 The theme of the prehistory of Genesis which Clines declares also played a

significant role in this study, since the researcher observed it on a smaller scale or more

local level in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah, comparable to the Flood and Babel

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[31] Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:83.
[32] Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:84.
[33] Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 10:85.

stories. In this sense, the researcher also investigated the prophetic role of Abraham and

Lot, since Clines also examines the ministerial work of each of them (Gen 18:23–33;

19:14–15, 18–20).

Lot in the New Testament Texts[34]

How do the New Testament writers perceive and remark on Lot or even Sodom

referred to this study? In the New Testament, Luke includes Jesus's description of Lot

going out from Sodom as an eschatological symbol emphasizing the final judgment on

the day of Jesus' coming (Luke 17:28–30).

Second Peter, on the other hand, refers to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and

Lot in Genesis 19 (2 Peter 2:6–8) in more detail. The writer describes Lot as "righteous"

three times,[35] while the ungodly Sodomites committed sins of "sensual conduct" and

"lawless deeds" which Lot saw and heard. Scholars offer three explanations of why Lot is

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[34] Since this study proceeds from the Hebrew Bible as a primary source, the New Testament documents can be referred to as secondary sources especially from the literary perspective in this review of related literatures. Rendle, Hugh. 2017. "Primary Resources for Biblical Interpretation: Primary Resources." Tyndale. Last updated July 24. Accessed April 25, 2018. https://libguides.tyndale.ca/c.php?g=315390&p=2107040; "Secondary Resources for Biblical Interpretation: Secondary Resources." Tyndale. Last updated July 24. Accessed April 25, 2018. https://libguides.tyndale.ca/c.php?g=315391&p=2107208.

[35] Green, in his argument on the righteousness of Lot, contends "Peter's concern in the present passage does not take him deep into the moral dilemma of the Lot story. His point is that in the time of divine judgment, God spares the righteous while executing his judgment on the wicked (2 Pet. 2:5–9)." Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 259.

described as "righteous." First, some argue that Peter looks on Lot as "righteous" according to popular Jewish traditions (Wis 10:6; 19:17). Others perceive Lot as relatively "righteous" in comparison to his contemporaries in Sodom. Still others point out that Abraham interceded for Lot as one of the righteous people in Sodom, although the writer of Genesis does not mention this directly.[36] In this study, the researcher attempted to explore Lot as one of the righteous in his relationship with Abraham in the literary narrative structure of Genesis.

The Parallel Approach to the Narratives (Gordon Wenham)

The researcher observed the similarities between the flood story (Gen 6–9) and the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18–19) in terms of verbal and contextual components. Wenham underlines the significance of the analysis of parallels found in the narrative of Genesis in his commentary.

Wenham analyzes the structures of the book of Genesis with literary and historical approaches in the final form of the Biblical text. He pays special attention to parallels in the patriarchal narrative, which have the potential to help interpret each other and this alerted us to compare and investigate them.

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[36] Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, Understanding the Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 190; Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 258.

These parallels (between the patriarchal plots) are being consciously drawn and even accentuated so that the analogy with the experiences of different generations can be observed. Therefore the stories should not be interpreted in isolation. They were written to shed mutual light on each other, and if we are to recapture and appreciate the original writer's motives and intentions, each cycle of stories must be read in the light of the others and each episode ought to be compared with other similar episodes. The slight differences from one version to another help to enhance the portrait of the actors.[37]

This approach also served in the investigation of the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18–19), because it is parallel with the flood story (Gen 6–9) according to Wenham's analysis.[38] At this point, the study of this parallel brought to light significant themes through "the theological principle of typology"[39] in this research. Furthermore, the researcher was required to review "both of the parallels between the stories and the developments within them" for a balanced interpretation.[40]

Observing similarities between the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah and the flood, Wenham analyzes the situations and the role of the characters and finds similar verbs used in both narratives.[41] Wenham insists on the significance of the role of Noah in

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[37] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 257.

[38] Wenham surveyed the parallels between the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah and the flood. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, vol. 2, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 42–43.

[39] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:257.

[40] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:258.

[41] Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 2:40–65; cf. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 88.

the flood and Lot in Sodom, although he seems confused with the role of Lot and

Abraham in comparison to the role of Noah. He compares the flood story with the

destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, where the main actors are Noah and Lot. However,

he does not compare Noah with Lot, but rather Abraham as the prototype of Adam.[42] In

this study, the researcher recognized Lot as analogous to Noah, for instance, in his

redemptive ministry.

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[42] Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 2:64; Enns instead compares Noah with Lot and points to the overlap of six elements between them. Peter Enns, "Uh, That Sounds Familiar (Again): Noah and Lot in the Book of Genesis," *Pete Enns*, September 18, 2019, accessed September 18, 2019, https://peteenns.com/uh-that-sounds-familiar-again-noah-and-lot-in-the-book-of-genesis/.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Methodology

Definition of and Assumption in Narrative Criticism

The researcher attempts to analyze the Biblical texts with narrative criticism as

the primary method of this study. Narrative criticism has been introduced and developed

by recent Biblical scholars, since this methodology is considered appropriate to the

Biblical narrative in the Hebrew Bible.[1] Tolmie defines narrative criticism as "the

systematic study of the typical features of narrative texts."[2] It is based on the assumption

that all narrative texts from antiquity until modern times have in common certain literary

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[1] Many Old Testament scholars identify the most influential and renowned narrative critics to be Sternberg, Gunn and Fewell, Berlin, Fokkelman, Bar-Efrat, and Alter. Significant works include Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, The Oxford Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*; J. P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide*, trans. Ineke Smit (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999); Shimeon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004); Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. Amit provides an overview of the historical development of narrative criticism in Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, 10–14. Also see Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 1–5; Tremper Longman III, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 3, Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 101–108.

[2] Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 1.

characteristics such as time and space, focalization (point of view), plot, characters, and

so on.[3] "These characteristics are then integrated and presented in terms of narratological

frameworks that can be used for the analysis of individual narrative texts."[4] The

frameworks will be discussed later.

The researcher, using a "normative process of reading" also assumes that "the

narrative is to be read sequentially and completely with all its parts being related to the

work as a whole."[5] The researcher, therefore, attempts to analyze the literary structure

from the point of view that the narrative is consecutive as a whole in the author's stylistic

and aesthetic literary design.

Implied Author and Reader in Narrative Criticism

Narrative criticism also examines the Biblical texts from "the perspective from

which the work (narrative) appears to have been written, a perspective that must be

reconstructed by readers on the basis of what they find in the narrative."[6] This

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[3] Mark Allan Powell, "Narrative Criticism," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 239–240.

[4] Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 1.

[5] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 242; See also Yairah Amit, "Narrative Analysis: Meaning, Context, and Origins of Genesis 38," in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*, ed. Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards, Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 272–273.

[6] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 240. Powell also refers that a work (narrative) "will always evince particular values, beliefs, and perception that can be described as representative of its implied." Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 241.

perspective, assumed through the analysis of the Biblical narrative, is perceived as the

implied author.[7] In other words, the implied author is, as Brown defines, "the textually

constructed author who communicates with and seeks to persuade the implied reader. The

implied author can be discerned wholly from the text itself; the construct is implied in the

text."[8]

On the other hand, "The concept of the implied reader," as Powell put it,

"parallels that of the implied author." He continues,

> The implied reader is one who actualizes the potential for meaning in a text, who
> responds to it in ways consistent with the expectations that we may ascribe to its
> implied author. The concept of the implied reader is a heuristic construct that
> allows critics to limit the subjectivity of their analysis by distinguishing between
> their own responses to a narrative and those that the text appears to invite."[9]

Awareness of the concept of an implied reader aided the researcher in avoiding

possible problems in analysis arising from subjective interpretation.

Narrative criticism also focuses attention on the effects that the Biblical narratives

are expected to have on their audience (the reader of the text), treating the Biblical texts

as literature which are "forms of communication that affect those who receive or

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[7] See also Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 6–7.

[8] Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 41.

[9] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 241. Brown argues that "Approaching the text as the implied reader helpfully balances cognitive and noncognitive intended responses, since the question is raised, How is the reader shaped by the text (in thinking, being, and doing)?" Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, 41.

experience them" and "mirrors that invite audience participation in the creation of

meaning."[10] The researcher, therefore, attempts to explore the effects that the narratives

are expected to have on the reader, and to create or reconstruct the meaning which the

author communicates through the Biblical narrative.

<div align="center">Synchronic and Diachronic Approach in Narrative Criticism</div>

One of the features of narrative criticism as a methodology, as already mentioned,

is that it focuses on the Biblical text itself.[11] In that sense, it is significant for the

researcher in the exegetical process to ask what the text is saying and how it is said, since

"the meaning of the story" as Fokkelman puts it, "originates only from the dialogue

between ourselves and the text."[12] The researcher, therefore, will depend chiefly on a

text-centered and synchronic approach which looks at the final form of the text,[13] but not

on a diachronic approach (the historical-critical method) which is interested in oral

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[10] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 239–240.

[11] Powell emphasizes that narrative criticism is primarily "text-centered." Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 85–86.

[12] Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide*, 26–27.

[13] Another reason for selecting this methodology is because the graduates from the ministerial and educational institutions, where the researcher has taught as a missionary for a long time (Rosales Wesleyan Bible College, Inc., Zambrano St., San Pedro West, Rosales, Pangasinan, Philippines, and other sister colleges in Palawan, Benguet, and Cebu), do not have financial resources to purchase enough reference materials to study the Bible. In such situations, narrative criticism, which is a synchronic and text-centered approach, is heuristic and helpful for them to read and study the Biblical texts effectively, since it directs them primarily to study the Biblical texts themselves and explore the meaning of the texts without outside references.

traditions, earlier versions, or possible written sources.[14]

The researcher, however, cannot completely neglect the diachronic approach to the text in this study, since "most Old Testament narrative prose," as Licht says, "embodies both aspects [historical and theological as diachronic, and storytelling as aesthetic and synchronic], in different proportions and modes of combination."[15] Powell insists on the significance of the diachronic approach and says, "Effective use of narrative criticism demands knowledge of the social and historical circumstances assumed by the narrative."[16] In this study, for example, the researcher explores the historical and contextual meaning as symbolism of the phrase "the garden of the LORD" (*gan-yhwh* [גַּן־יהוה]), in addition to a synchronic approach (Gen 13:10). Powell remarks, "The goal of narrative criticism must be to uncover the meaning intended (or constructed) by the implied author, a meaning that is not esoteric but that the implied reader is expected to

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[14] See the survey of the synchronic and diachronic approach by Gorman. Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 13–17. Tolmie argues conceptually and historically about historical-critical perspectives. Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 1–5. Cotter remarks that historical-critical critics isolated the reader from the Biblical text and lose the application of the message to the contemporary reader. Cotter, *Genesis*, 105–129. See also Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 5–12. Powell insists on literary criticism aiming at interpreting "the current text, in its finished form." Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 7.

[15] Jacob Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), 19. Tsumura emphasizes that "In principle, a diachronic approach to a biblical text should be preceded by a synchronic study of the text as it is." David Toshio Tsumura, *The Second Book of Samuel*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 5–7.

[16] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 7; See also R. Alan Culpepper, "Story and History in the Gospels," *Review & Expositor* 81, no. 3 (1984): 468–469.

grasp."[17] According to the concept of "symbols of cultural range" which Powell presents

as one of four categories of symbols, the meaning of "the garden of the LORD" is to be

derived from "the social and historical context of the real author and his or her

community."[18] Powell refers to the significance of historical criticism in understanding

this type of symbol as follows,

> This fourth type of symbol poses a special problem for narrative critics: access to
> the meaning of these symbols is not gained through the narrative itself, for the
> implied author simply assumes the reader will understand them. If modern critics
> are to read the narrative as the implied reader they must at this point rely on
> insights gained from historical criticism.[19]

Therefore, the researcher uses the diachronic critical and historical approach, as

well as primarily the synchronic approach, analyzing the Biblical texts in their final form,

since this dual methodology is effective in identifying the meanings and messages the

author conveys in the narrative.[20]

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[17] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 29.

[18] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 29; See also R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 184; Philip Wheelwright, *Metaphor and Reality* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 99–110.

[19] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 29.

[20] Amit also argues for the combination of the synchronic and diachronic methods of analysis in a complementary way. Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, 22–32.

Theoretical Framework

The research, as already discussed, proceeds within the theoretical framework which some narrative critics deploy in their investigations (Figure 3.1). Chatman focuses on the narrative text and analyzes the components such as the real author, the implied author, the narrator, the characters, events, time, setting, focalization, the narratee, the implied reader, and the real reader (in the present case, the researcher and the contemporary modern reader), described or undescribed in the narrative text.[21]
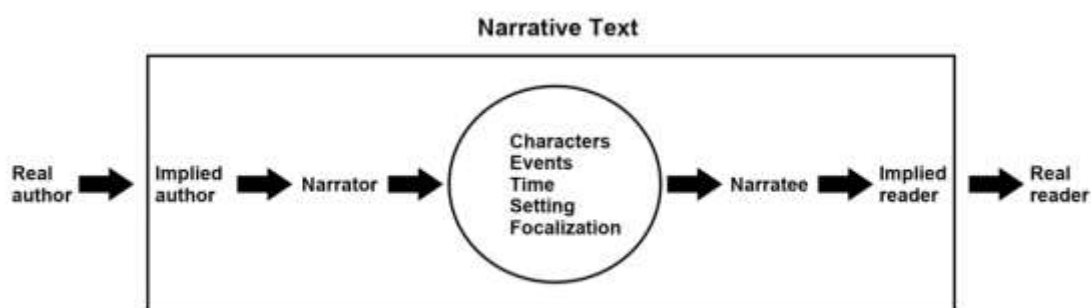
Figure 3.1. Theoretical framework in narrative criticism[22]

Definition of Terms

Focalization, or point of view, in narrative criticism is the device which "the Bible uses," as Berlin says, "frequently and effectively as a vehicle for conveying its

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[21] The researcher follows Tolmie's diagram which updated Chatman's. Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 5–6. Chatman approves the possibilities of the absence of the narrator and the narratee. Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, 150–151. Rimmon-Kenan attempts to exclude the implied author and reader but include the narrator and the narratee from this narrative communication situation. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2005), 89–91. See also Willem S. Vorster, "The Reader in the Text: Narrative Material," *Semeia* 48 (1989): 29–30.

[22] Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 6.

narratives."[23] Focalization guides the reader into understanding "whose telling or

showing we are receiving, and how these types of presentations are made."[24] The

following questions are helpful for identifying focalization: "Through whose eyes do we

view the events that are being narrated to us?"[25] The researcher applies the idea of

focalization to Lot and the narrator in Genesis 13 and to the LORD in Genesis 18 to

understand the meaning of the narrative and its significance.

The narrative has a twofold link with time: (1) **Narrated time** (narrative time or

story-time) is internal time that a narrative develops within time; (2) **Narration time**

(text-time) is external and objective time that is required for telling or reading the

narrative.[26] The author, for instance, represents both kinds of time in Genesis 13:10:

"And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere

like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was

before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)" In this passage, the story of Lot in

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[23] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 43. Tolmie and Ska surveys focalization (point of view) in narrative criticism. Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 29–37; Jean Louis Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us": Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, vol. 13, Subsidia Biblica (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2000), 65–81.

[24] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 43.

[25] Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 32.

[26] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 141–144; Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 93; Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us": Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 13:7–8.

the context is narrated according to internal time (narrated time), but on the other hand,

the narrator interrupts the flow of the story with the phrase: "This was before the LORD

destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah." This phrase indicates that the narrator relates the story

from the objective point in time where the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in

chapter 19 (cf. Gen 13:13).[27]

There are two major types of **irony** in the Bible: verbal and dramatic irony.[28]

Dramatic irony is defined as "a contrast between the inaccurate perception of a situation

by at least one character and the perception of the real situation by the reader."[29] In short,

it occurs when the reader encounters complete perception and knowledge unavailable to

one or more characters, but which the author also has known.[30] Therefore, in dramatic

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[27] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 141–143; M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 10th ed. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012), 186; Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us": Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 13:7–8. On the other hand, verbal irony is defined as "a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed." Abrams and Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 184.

[28] Camery-Hoggatt argues, "the wide distribution of irony suggests that it was born of *the author's conscious intent*." In that sense, "Irony lies close to *the narrative's core*" (emphasis added). Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext*, ed. G. N. Stanton, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph 72 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ix. Sharp mentions, "The dramatic ironies unfold to reveal a startling truth." Carolyn J. Sharp, *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible*, Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 54.

[29] Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us": Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 13:60.

[30] David V. Urban, "Irony," ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 335; W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 98–99. See also Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext*, 2–4.

irony the reader's perception and knowledge is more significant.[31] The researcher, for

example, recognizes dramatic irony in Lot's selection of the Jordan Valley (Gen 13) and

the story of the Lot's escape to Zoar (19:1–28).

Sources of Data

The researcher will use English translations of the Biblical texts as well as the

Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible (MT) as the primary sources.[32] This research also

makes reference to the secondary literature such as monographs, commentaries, and

articles in journals, dictionaries, and websites.

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[31] Booth insists, "Dramatic irony always depends strictly on the reader's or spectator's knowing something about a character's situation that the character does not know." Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 255.

[32] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016); Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983)

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTEXT OF THE NARRATIVE OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH
(GENESIS 11–14)

Since the author of Genesis develops the narrative in stylistic and organized form,

the researcher explored the literary structure where the author describes Lot's

appearances in context. Lot's fifth (and sixth) appearances do not happen abruptly and

randomly in Genesis 18–19 (specifically, 19:1–29), but stylistically, aesthetically, and

deliberately in a context. For that reason, the researcher worked to clarify Lot's role as a

supporting character within the literary structure which starts with his first appearance at

the very beginning of the Abrahamic narrative (Gen 11) and moves toward Lot's fifth

(and sixth) appearances (Gen 18–19).

Lot's First Appearance (11:27–32)

The author begins the Abrahamic narrative with the toledot (תּוֹלְדֹת) formula by

recounting that Terah fathered three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran (11:27).[1] The author

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[1] The term toledot, "which focuses attention on what is born or produced," functions as prologue to each section in Genesis (Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1;11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1; 37:2). Kenneth. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 32–33;V. J. Steiner, "Literary Structure of the Pentateuch," *DOT:P* 550–551. Thomas argues about the function of the toledot formula in detail. Matthew A. Thomas, *These Are the Generations: Identity, Covenant, and the 'Toledot' Formula*, vol. 551, LHBOTS (New York: T& T Clark, 2011), 31–48.

describes Lot's appearance as 'the son of Haran' in these first lines of the Abrahamic

narrative (11:27, 31). The existence of Haran here has an effect on the patriarchal

narrative in two points, even though he died early in the narrative (11:28). First, he

fathers Lot, a nephew of Abraham who accompanies Terah (11:31) and Abraham (12:4),

and with whom Abraham maintains relationship and concern in the narrative (Gen 13–14;

18). Second, he gives his daughter Milcah to Nahor his brother to marry (11:29). This

plays a crucial role in increasing the patriarchal descendants. Thus, Bethuel whom Milcah

bore fathered Rebekah (22:20–23), who later married Isaac, the only son of Abraham

God promised (24:1–67), and who bore twins: Esau and Jacob, later called Israel later

(25:19–28; 32:28). Therefore, the existence of Haran as a character, even after death,

influences the Abrahamic narrative through his descendants.

Nahor also influences the plot of the narrative in two points. First, Nahor fathered

Bethuel, father of Rebecca, as mentioned above. Second, he also fathered Laban, who

appears as an annoying character (antagonist) to cause difficulties for Jacob in the plot,

but he becomes the father-in-law of Jacob, who becomes the father of the twelve tribes

(29–31). Therefore, Nahor as well as Haran, also makes contributions to the development

of the narrative of the descendants of Abraham.

The portrayal of the principal character Abraham begins with his marriage to Sarah, which involves the first major predicament in the plot: the barrenness of Sarah (11:30). Most of the plot unfolds around this predicament, since it is related to the fulfillment of the promise of God to Abraham. Ultimately the author shows how the problem reaches a solution in Chapter 21, when Sarah bears a son Isaac.

The Masoretic text employs *wālāḏ* (ולד) (11:30), translated in English as 'child'. This Hebrew word *wālāḏ* (ולד), referring to Abraham's son Isaac, occurs only this once. The other Hebrew texts use *yêleḏ* (ילד) (child) instead of *wālāḏ* (ולד).[2] Furthermore, the verb of *yālaḏ* (ילד) (bear), referring to Isaac, occurs several times in Genesis 16, 17, and 21, where the LORD intervenes directly in the critical problem and divine solution of Sarah's barrenness. Specifically, the gradual revelation of God that Sarah will have a son (15:4, 5; 17:16, 19, 21) culminates at Chapter 18:10, 14, and the LORD fulfills His promise (21:2). In this sense, Genesis 18 is so important that the LORD's final statement that Sarah will have a son is revealed to Sarah too as a supporting character with Abraham (18:10, 14), before the divine fulfillment (21:2).

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[2] Karl Elliger, William Rudolph, and Adrian Schenker, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 16.

The author designs the introductory exposition (11:27–32) to build the reader's

anticipation of the development of the narrative with these characters.[3] Furthermore, the

author draws the reader's attention to three characters who are significant in the

development of the narrative, i.e., Abraham, Lot, and Sarah (11:31), although the author

immediately clarifies who is the main character among them (12:1–3). Nevertheless, Lot

is introduced as a noteworthy character as well as Abraham and Sarah at the beginning of

the narrative.

Lot's Second Appearance (12:1–9)

Lot's second appearance occurs in Abraham's obedience to the word of the

LORD (12:4–5) soon after the LORD's calling of Abraham (12:1–3). In verse 4, the

author writes that when "Abraham went, as the LORD had told him, Lot went with him"

and emphasizes that both Abraham's and Lot's actions are the same by using the Hebrew

word *hālaḵ* (הלך) (go or walk). This word connotes "destination and companionship on a

journey"[4] in metaphorical use, and "living out their days in general or in obedience or

disobedience to the divine principles designed to govern their lives on earth"[5] in

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[3] See Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us": Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 13:21–25.

[4] F. J. Helfmeyer, "הָלַךְ and הֲלִיכָה," *TDOT* 3:388–403

[5] Eugene H. Merrill, "הָלַךְ," *NIDOTTE* 1:1032–1035

theological use, as well as literal spatial movement. In other words, the author implies that Lot in obedience accompanied Abraham who obeyed what the LORD had told him. This indicates that Abraham and Lot have an intimate and trustworthy relationship in the journey.

Nevertheless, the author portrays Abraham as the main character who takes initiative in the development of the narrative (12:5). The author underlines this by repeating the syntactic phrase employed for Terah, as the Masoretic text indicates: "Terah took Abram his son and Lot" (***wayyiqqaḥ** teraḥ **ʾeṯ**-ʾaḇrām beⁿô **weʾeṯ-lôṭ** [ויקח תרח את אברם בנו ואת לוט]) (Gen 11:31); "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son" (***wayyiqqaḥ** ʾaḇrām **ʾeṯ**-śāray ʾištô **weʾeṯ-lôṭ** ben-ʾāḥiw [ויקח אברם את־שרי אשתו ואת לוט בן־אחיו]) (Gen 12:5; emphasis added). These reiterated statements imply that Lot has withdrawn from the position of Abraham's willing and faithful follower, although their relationship is unbroken, and that he serves as a supporting character of Abraham (12:4).[6]

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[6] The author sets up the word "possessions" (*rekhush* [רכוש]) (12:5) as a critical motif for the following development of the narrative, that is, as a chief factor which causes the separation between Abraham and Lot (13:6). It is also significant when Abraham rescues Lot and his possessions from the enemy (14:11, 12, 16, 21), and is part of as the promise of God to Abraham and his descendants for the future (15:14). The Hebrew word *rekhush* (רכוש) is not employed after Genesis 15 in the Abrahamic narrative. The author, in other words, designs 12:1–15:21 as a large unit of the narrative developed with this motif 'possession' (*rekhush* [רכוש]) as a literary device.

Lot's Third Appearance (13:1–18)

The author portrays Lot as compatible with Abraham in prosperity at first (13:2,

5).[7] The strife between Lot's and Abraham's herdsmen due to their increasing

possessions (*rekhush* [רכוש]) (13:6) brings about their separation. As a result, Lot chooses

and settles the Jordan Valley as far as Sodom and settles there (13:11).

Focalizations, Time Order, Symbolism, and Irony in 13:10

The researcher does not view Lot's selection of the Jordan Valley as negative and

selfish, as some scholars analyze (13:10).[8] This is clear from the analysis of literary

devices used in 13:10. The author presents Lot's selection of the Jordan Valley using

particular focalizations, time order, symbolism, and dramatic irony, and the attentive

reader is expected to note these devices as they read. Following is an analysis of each of

these literary devices in 13:10 and how the reader is thereby expected to understand this

verse.

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[7] Andersen posits that the use of the Hebrew word *wᵉgam* (וגם) (13:5) obviates the antithesis that Abraham had silver and gold (13:2), but Lot had tents (13:5), and instead asserts the fact that they were 'comparably wealthy.' Francis I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, Practica 231 (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 160; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 292.

[8] Kinder considers that Lot selected the Valley "selfishly." Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 129. Mathews also argues Lot's decision "with lexical allusions to the infamous choices of Eve in the garden." Kenneth. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, vol. 1B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 136.

The character's (Lot's) and the narrator's focalizations in 13:10

The researcher observes that the author draws a clear distinction between Lot's and the narrator's focalizations (13:10).[9] The author at first portrays Lot's outward manifestations ('Lot lifted up his eyes') and Lot's inner perceptions ('and saw that…') (13:10). The author delineates and communicates Lot's inner viewpoints to the reader through the narrator but without Lot's direct speech, which is a literary technique to articulate the character's inner perceptions,[10] so that this inner focalization draws the reader's attention to Lot's feelings and thoughts that "Lot saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar" (13:10).[11]

The author, however, shifts from Lot's inner perceptions to the narrator's focalization in the same verse: "This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah" (13:10). One should note that this statement is written from the viewpoint of not Lot, but of the narrator. This is true of another reference to Sodom: "Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD" (13:13). Thus, the narrator

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[9] Berlin analyzes the multiplicity of viewpoints (focalizations) serves as "one of the best vehicles for conveying a subjective presentation of one viewpoint," like how Lot felt. Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 67–68.

[10] See Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 86–87.

[11] Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives*, 29–38; Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 43–82.

foreshadows God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Sodomites' wickedness

to the reader, while not asserting that Lot had already known about it, or not at this point.

The clear distinction between the character's (Lot's) and the narrator's

focalizations, therefore, makes allusion to the possibility that Lot's selection of the Jordan

Valley was innocent and natural.[12] This counters the common negative perceptions of

Lot's selection of the Jordan Valley, which are largely bound to the statements from the

narrator's focalizations of God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Sodomites'

wickedness (13:10, 13).

Time Order in 13:10

The author, as already mentioned, describes this passage with the manipulation of

temporal relations as well as varied focalizations. In other words, the author rearranges

"the order in which the events are arranged in the narrative text" (13:10) and "that in

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[12] Mizuno argues that (1) Lot did not know God would destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, (2) he ended up knowing much later through an angel (19:13), and (3) Mizuno, at this point, doubts Lot's selection to settle in Sodom in spite of knowing God's future plan of destruction, and (4) the knowledge that God would destroy Sodom and Gomorrah belongs only to the narrator at this point. Ryuichi Mizuno, *Reading the Abraham Narrative: A Literary-Critical Approach (アブラハム物語を読む−文芸批評的アプローチ)* (Tokyo: Shinkyo Publishing, 2006), 86. The researcher also observes that Lot as a head of household would have had more responsibility to manage and protect his family and household after he and his household parted from Abraham and his household. For that reason, one might be able to say that it was natural and necessary for Lot to select the Jordan Valley "well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar" (13:10). V. H. Matthews, "Family Relationship," *DOT:P* 291–299. Hamilton also argues the validity of Lot's selection of the Valley from his role as "the elder, the head of the clan." Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 93.

which the events originally occurred" (Gen 19).[13] Therefore, the reader recognizes that

the phrase "This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah" (13:10) is

narrated "at a point before events that happened earlier, are narrated" (prolepsis or

foreshadowing).[14] In short, while recounting the reader the event in Genesis 13 from the

perspective of Genesis 18–19, the narrator "communicate(s) an important ideological

perspective" to the reader through this temporal order.[15]

It is clear that the author draws the reader's attention to the development of the

narrative toward what is going to happen: God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and

additionally the Sodomites' wickedness (ideological and theological perspective), and

creates suspense and tension about what will happen to Lot next and in such a critical

situation.[16] In fact, it is not yet necessary for the reader at this point to perceive and judge

that Lot's choice to dwell in the Jordan Valley is right or wrong. Rather, the reader could

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[13] Tolmie refers to the need of reconstructing "the original order of events" in the analysis of the temporal order in the narrative. Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 87.

[14] Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 88. Ska contends that the literary function of prolepses is that the reader's "attention can focus more on the 'how' of the concrete narration than on the 'what' of the 'story'." Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us": Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 13:8. Coats recognizes that the author's reference to God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah "foreshadows" and "prepares the way for" chapter 19. George W. Coats, *Genesis: With an Introduction to Narrative Literature*, vol. 1, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 117.

[15] Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 88.

[16] Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, 112–113; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 48–53; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 179.

anticipate and wait for what will happen to Lot in the development of the narrative with suspense and tension.

Garden of the LORD as theological motif (symbolism) in 13:10

The author employs in Lot's first perception the fascinating theological motif of "the garden of the LORD" (*gan-yhwh* [גן־יהוה]) to desscribe the Jordan Valley which Lot saw, chose, and settled in (13:10).[17] Hamilton notes, with his argument over the use of the Hebrew syntactic phrase *rāʾâ ki* [ראה כי] in Genesis, that Lot did not see (*yarʾ*[ירא]) the Jordan Valley "covetously," but "observed how well watered was the plain of Jordan, and accordingly chose this territory."[18]

Wenham, however, assumes the story of the garden of Eden as "a highly symbolic narrative" in his study and concludes the garden of Eden "as an archetypal sanctuary, that is a place where God dwells and where man should worship Him."[19] He looks on the garden of Eden as a religious and theological place: the presence of God and a human

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[17] Mizuno points out that the author or narrator and the reader had in common the understanding about the metaphor "the garden of the LORD." Mizuno, *Reading the Abraham Narrative: A Literary-Critical Approach (アブラハム物語を読む−文芸批評的アプローチ)*, 87.

[18] Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 392.

[19] Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 4-12, 1985*, Pirsume ha-Igud ha-ʿolami le-madaʿe ha-Yahadut (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 19.

place of worship. Furthermore, Walton surveys the garden of Eden in his comparative

study and says, "The presence of God was the key to the garden and was understood by

author and audience as a given from the ancient worldview. His presence is seen as the

fertile source of all life-giving waters."[20] Here he also associates the presence of God

with other 'life-giving waters' in Scripture (Ezek 47:1–12, Zech 14:8, Ps 46:4; Rev 22:1–

2). In addition, Wenham refers to the entrance's bearings 'east' as one of the features

finding parallels in later sanctuaries.[21] This may be true of the Jordan Valley which Lot

selected and where he journeyed 'east' (13:11), although some scholars analyze the

direction Lot took as 'divine judgment'.[22]

Accordingly, the author assumes positive theological meanings for the word

choices "watered" "the garden of the LORD"[23] (13:10) and "east" (13:11), so that the

reader can perceive Lot's selection as reasonable and theologically appropriate.[24] In other

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[20] John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 124.

[21] Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," 21.

[22] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 1:297–298; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, 1B:131.

[23] Biblical writers connote theologically positive meaning in such words as "Eden" "garden of Eden" "garden of God," and "garden of the LORD" (Is 51:3; Ezek 28:13; 31:1, 16, 18; 36:35; Joel 2:3).

[24] Mathews defines that Lot provides 'a contrast' for the patriarch and his heirs like Cain for Abel, Ishmael for Isaac, and Esau for Jacob. And he puts, "The Abram-Lot tension is a forerunner to the struggles among sibling rivals that are integral to the later patriarchal narratives." In that sense, he interprets each of words and phrase: 'saw' 'watered' 'garden of the LORD,' and 'east' as negative. Therefore he insists that "Lot is passive and foolish." Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, 1B:130–131, 136, 140. See also Laurence A. Turner, "Lot as Jekyll and Hyde: A Reading of Genesis 18-19," in *Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield*, ed. David J. A. Clines and Fowl, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 87 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 97; Dan Rickett, "Rethinking the Place and Purpose of Genesis 13," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 36.1 (2011): 40–41; Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, 1:129.

words, the author's positive reference to 'the garden of the LORD' implies that Lot might

have chosen the Jordan Valley without negative knowledge and perception of the moral

and spiritual situation of Sodom referred to in Genesis 13:13.

Dramatic irony in 13:10

The author also uses dramatic irony as a literary device in the gap between the

character's (Lot's) and the reader's perceptions of the Jordan Valley (Sodom). Lot

perceives the positive feature that the Jordan Valley (Sodom) "was well watered

everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt" (13:10), while the

reader through the narrator perceives the negative and critical feature that the LORD will

destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and that the Sodomites are wicked, great sinners against

the LORD (13:10, 13).[25] The author makes a clear distinction between the character's

and the reader's perceptions through this dramatic irony in addition to his use of

focalization and time order (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. The gap between the character's and the reader's perception/knowledge

the narration	Perception/knowledge	
	the character's (Lot's)	the reader's
the Jordan Valley watered well like the garden of the Lord and the land of Egypt (13:10)	☐	☐
God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (13:10)	–	☐
the Sodomites' wickedness (13:13)	–	☐

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[25] Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us": Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 13:60.

This means that the reader, through this use of irony, may reject Lot's assessment

of the Jordan Valley as watered well like the garden of the LORD and the land of Egypt,

and instead anticipate God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Sodomites'

wickedness.[26] The reader is provided information given directly by the narrator and can

perceive that while Lot selected the Jordan Valley watered well like the garden of the

LORD and the land of Egypt, he instead would run into perilous moral and spiritual

conditions. The point is to create interest in what will happen to Lot there in the midst of

the Sodomites' wickedness and where God has doomed Sodom and Gomorrah to

destruction in the narrative context.

Lot's Fourth Appearance (14:1–24)

The author portrays Lot as a foil to Abraham in this narrative. Lot appears as a

passive and inactive character, since he is a captive taken by the enemy (14:12) and

rescued by Abraham (14:16).

The Narrator's focalization on Lot in 14:12, 14, and 16

The author uses two kinds of focalization for the reader. First, the author refers to

Lot as 'the son of Abram's brother' (*ben-ʾᵃḥi ʾaḇrām* [בן אחי אברם]) (14:12) and 'his

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[26] Booth presents four steps to reconstruct ironic meaning. See Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*, 10–12.

kinsman' (*ʾāḥiw* [אחין]) (14:14, 16) employing the narrator's focalization, which was already referred to in Genesis 11:31 and 12:5. This highlights the Abraham-Lot relationship which had been maintained and kept related by blood, despite their separation from each other (13:11). Because of this relationship, Abraham takes on the responsibility of rescuing Lot from the enemy (14:16).[27]

The character's (Lot's) focalization on dwelling in Sodom in 14:12

Second, the author reminds the reader of Lot's journey (13:12) through outward focalization: He "was dwelling in Sodom" (*wᵉhûʾ yōšeḇ bisḏōm* [והוא ישב בסדם]) (14:12). This indicates the literary connection and sequence between chapters 13 and 14, although the eventual theme itself is different.[28] The author employs Lot's viewpoints in migratory representations: "Lot settled among the cities of the valley" (*lôṭ yāšaḇ bᵉʿāre hakkikkār* [לוט ישב בארי הככר]) (13:12b); "(Lot) moved [pitched] his tent as far as Sodom" (*yeʾehal ʿaḏ-sᵉḏōm* [ויאהל עד־סדם]) (13:12c); "He was dwelling in Sodom" (*hûʾ yōšeḇ bisḏōm* [הוא ישב בסדם]) (Gen 14:12).

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[27] Abraham's rescue of Lot seems to be the most natural, as Matthews points outs, "each household (of Abraham and Lot) functioned as a part of the larger covenantal community, taking on responsibilities designed to strengthen the overall economy, prevent erosion of social control and protect those members of the group who had lost, either temporarily (debt slavery) or permanently (widows), their ability to cope with social and economic forces." V. H. Matthews, "Family Relationship," *DOT:P* 291–299.

[28] John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis-Leviticus*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, Revised., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 164.

Table 4.2. Lot's spatial transition: Use of verbs and geographical places

	Gen.	Verb		Place	
		ESV	MT	ESV	MT
1	13:12	settled	yāšaḇ [ישב]	among the cities of the valley	beʿāre hakkikkār [בערי הככר]
2		moved his tent	yeʾᵉhal [יאהל]	as far as Sodom	ʿaḏ-sᵉḏōm [עד־סדם]
3	14:12	was dwelling	yōšēḇ [ישב]	in Sodom	bisḏōm [בסדם]
4	19:01	was sitting	yōšēḇ [ישב]	in the gate of Sodom	bᵉšaʿar-sᵉḏōm [בשער־סדם]
5	19:23	came	bāʾ [בא]	to Zoar	ṣōʿᵃrâ [צערה]
6	19:29	had lived	yāšaḇ [ישב]	in the cities	ʾeṯ-heʿārim…bahen [את־הערים... בהן]
7	19:30	went up	yaʿal [יעל]	out of Zoar	miṣṣôʿar [מצוער]
8		lived	yešeḇ [ישב]	in the hills	bahār [בהר]
9		was afraid to live	yāreʾ lāšeḇeṯ [ירא לשבת]	in Zoar	bᵉṣôʿar [בצוער]
10		lived	yešeḇ [ישב]	in a cave	bammᵉārâ [במערה]

MT: The Masoretic Text

The author, in addition, delineates and develops Lot's migratory representations with the use of verbs (*yšb* [ישב] often used) and geographical locations (Sodom, Zoar, and the hills) in the literary framework between Genesis 13–14 and 18–19 (Table 4.2). The reader will be aware that Lot's spatial transition is his migratory journey from Sodom into the hills, where God commanded him to flee (19:17), by way of Zoar, where he pleaded with God to flee (19:20).

Furthermore, Wenham claims that chapter 14 refers to Lot's dwelling in Sodom (14:12) is "an indispensable stepping stone" between chapter 13 and 18, in that it intensifies Abraham's concern for the town in his intercession (18:23–33).[29] Mathews

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[29] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 1:306.

investigates chapter 14 from historical perspective and concludes, "the chapter shows a

literary unity and a vital link in its present literary context of Genesis" and "contextually

fits well within the Abraham narrative, contributing to the Abraham-Lot motif." In his

survey, he presents 14:12 as a hinge verse in this chapter that anticipates "Abraham's role

and the outcome he will engineer."[30]

Therefore, the author does not simply portray Lot as a supporting character, a

victim of war in a story, but also clarifies that he plays an important role in constructing

the contextual literary framework in the Abraham-Lot narrative.

Literary Framework Between Genesis 13–14 and 18–19

The author develops the narrative section of chapter 14 and 18–19 with Lot's

choice to dwell in the Jordan Valley. Furthermore, the narrator's reference to the divine

destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (13:10) and the Sodomites' wickedness and

sinfulness (13:13) foreshadows divine judgment in the climax of Abraham-Lot narrative

(Gen 18–19). Therefore, the author frames the literary structure with these references

(13:10, 13) in relation to both the next and the last events in Abraham-Lot narrative, as

seen below in Figure 4.1. The first part of the structure includes the foretelling of God's

destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (13:10), the Sodomites' wickedness and sinfulness

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[30] Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 1B:46–47.

(13:13), and Abram's military rescue of Lot (Gen 14). The latter part of the structure

balances this with Abraham's intercessory rescue of Lot carried out by the angels in

Sodom (Gen 18–19), the proof of the Sodomites' wickedness and sinfulness (19:5, 9),

and God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (19:24–25).[31]

Gen 13	Gen 14		Gen 18	Gen 19
God's destruction (13:10) the Sodomites' wickedness (13:13)	Abram's rescue of Lot		Abraham's rescue of Lot with his intercession and through the angels (18–19)	the Sodomites' wickedness (19:5, 9) God's destruction of (19:24, 25)

Figure 4.1. Literary framework between Genesis 13–14 and 18–19

Conclusion

The author portrays Lot as one of three key characters, along with Abraham and

Sarah, at the beginning of the Abrahamic narrative (11:31). Lot appears first as

Abraham's companion, but then seems less willing in his ongoing journey with Abraham

(12:4–5). The author, in Lot's third appearance, describes the Abram-Lot relationship as

comparable in their wealth, and guides and expects the reader reasonably and

theologically to read and understand Lot's selection of the Jordan valley in 13:10 with the

use of various literary techniques: focalizations of Lot and the narrator, time order

(prolepsis), positive and crucial theological motif (symbolism), and gaps between the

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[31] Walsh terms this partial symmetry inclusio. See Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, 57–59.

character's (Lot's) and the reader's perceptions (dramatic irony). In Lot's fourth

appearance, the reader notes that the Abraham-Lot relationship still remains strong and

reliable through the story of Abraham's rescue of Lot and his family, although they have

parted in chapter 13.

Lot's appearance in chapter 14 makes a significant contribution contextually to

forming the literary structure of the Abraham-Lot narrative not only in this chapter, but

also in the previous and following chapters. In other words, the author designs the literary

framework between Gen 13–14 and 18–19 with the key themes: Abraham's rescue of

Lot, the Sodomites' wickedness, and God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

CHAPTER 5

THE CONTEXT OF LOT'S FIFTH AND SIX APPEARANCES:
ABRAHAM'S COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH AND PLEA TO GOD
(18:1–33)

Although the author places Lot individually and autonomously in 19:1–29, this

unit itself does not stand alone. The author sets it up in the context of 18:1–33 with three

thematic subunits: God's final announcement to Abraham about Sarah's birth of a son

(18:1–15), God's introspection about covenant with Abraham and His judgment against

Sodom and Gomorrah (18:16–21), and Abraham's intercession for the righteous in

Sodom (18:22–33). The researcher, therefore, will attempt to examine the relationship of

the literary structure between 18:1–33 and 19:1–38.

Lot does not appear here in Genesis 18:1–33 and, through Abraham's plea for

God to save the righteous in Sodom, the author seems to describe Lot as a supporting

character in his relationship with Abraham. This observation is based on the researcher's

examination of the Abraham-Lot relationship which has been discussed in Genesis 11–

14. In other words, the Abraham-Lot relationship is represented here in the story of

Abraham's rescue of Lot not through physical and military actions (14:12–17), but

through the spiritual and prophetic actions of Abraham (18:20–33). Thus, the researcher

will specifically explore Lot as a supporting character, one of the righteous people in

Sodom for whom Abraham cannot help but intercede with God for salvation out of the

midst of destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

God's Final Announcement to Abraham about Sarah's Birth of Isaac (18:1–15)

Abraham's and Lot's Hospitality (18:1–8; 19:1–11)

The author begins this unit with Abraham's hospitality to the men (18:1–8), while

designing it in parallel with Lot's hospitality to the men (19:1–11). Questions the men

ask soon after each of their hospitalities frame both of the units:

> "They [the men] said to him [Abraham], 'Where is Sarah your wife?"
> (**wayyōʾmᵉrû ʾelā**yw ᵃ ʾ**ayyê** śārâ ʾišteḵā [ויאמרו אליו איה שרה אשתך]) (18:9,
> emphasis added);
> "Then the men said to Lot, 'Have you anyone else here?'" (**wayyōʾmᵉrû**
> hāʾᵃnāšim ᵃ ʾ**el**-lôṭ ʿōḏ **mi**-lᵉḵā po [ויאמרו האנשים אל־לוט עד מי־לך פה]) (19:12,
> emphasis added).

The reader, therefore, could note that the literary structure of 18:1–8 has a bearing

upon 19:1–11 from thematic and literary perspectives.[1]

God's Announcement of Abraham's Heir (Genesis 15–18)

The crucial event in the Abrahamic narrative, however, is a dialogue between

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[1] See also Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, 180–181; Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible*, 131–134. Brueggemann recognizes 18:1–8 as "the only stage setting" of the following part (18:9–15).

God, Abraham, and Sarah regarding God's announcement to Abraham about Sarah's birth of a son. The development of God's announcement of Abraham's heir begins at 15:4 and ends at 18:10, 14 (as seen in Table 5.1). In that sense, this unit (18:1–15) plays an important role in formulating the final divine announcement to Abraham's heir in context.

Table 5.1. God's announcement of Abraham's heir (Genesis 15–18)

Genesis	Features	Key Words (ESV/MS)
15:4	• Denial of Eliezer • Abraham's own son	"This man shall not…" (*lōʾ…kî-ʾim* [לֹא…כִּי־אִם]) "your very own son" (*ʾᵃšer yêṣeʾ mimmeʿēkā hûʾ* [אשר יצא ממעיך הוא])
17:16	• A son by Sarah	"a son by her" (*mimmennâ lᵉkā ben* [ממנה לך בן])
17:19	• Denial of Ishmael • Call his name Isaac	"No, but…" (*ʾᵃbol…* [אבל…]) "call his name Isaac" (*wᵉqārāʾtā ʾet-šᵉmô yîṣḥāq* [וקראת את־שמו יצחק])
17:21	• Time of Sarah's Delivery	"at this time next year" (*lammôʿēd hazzê baššānâ hāʾaḥerēt* [למועד הזה בשנה האחרת])
18:10	• Time of Sarah's Delivery	"about this time next year" (*kāʿēt ḥayyâ* [כעת היה])
18:14	• Time of Sarah's Delivery	"At the appointed time I will return to you" (*lammôʿēd ʾāšûb ʾelekā* [למועד אשוב אליך]) "about this time next year" (*kāʿēt ḥayyâ* [כעת היה])

God's Final Announcement of Sarah's Birth of Isaac (17:15–21; 18:1–15)

The author clarifies the divine double announcement of Sarah's birth of a son (18:9–10, 13–14), while the character betrays the reader's anticipation to believe it: Sarah could not believe it but laughed and denied it (18:12, 15). This reminds the reader of her husband Abraham's attitude at that very moment when he also encountered the same divine announcement of Sarah's birth of a son in the previous chapter: Abraham could not believe it but laughed and denied it (17:17–18). The author arranges the juxtaposition

between Abraham and Sarah about their attitudes toward the divine announcement of

Sarah's birth of a son and clarifies their doubts to and predicaments in faith in God. The

author indicates them with Hebrew syntactic parallels between Abraham and Sarah, as

follows:

> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" (*wayyippōl ʾaḇrahām ʿal-pānāyw wayyiṣḥāq wayyōʾmer bᵉlibbô halleḇen meʾâ-šānâ yîwwāleḏ wᵉʾim-śārâ hᵃḇaṯ-tišʿim šānâ teleḏ*: [ויפל אברהם על־ פניו ויצחק ויאמר בלבו הלבן מאה־שנה יולד ואם־שרה הבת־תשעים שנה תלד:] (17:17; emphasis added);
> So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"(*wattiṣḥaq śārâ bᵉqirbah leʾmōr ʾaḥᵃre ḇᵉlōṯi hāyṯâ-li ʿeḏnâ waʾḏōni zāqen*:[ותצחק שרה בקרבה לאמר אחרי בלתי היתה־לי עדנה ואדני זקן:] (18:12; emphasis added);
> The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'" (*wayyōʾmer yhwh ʾel-ʾaḇrahām lāmmâ zê ṣoḥᵃqâ śārâ leʾmōr haʾap ʾumnām ʾeleḏ waʾᵃni zāqanti:* [ויאמר יהוה אל־אברהם למה זה צחקה שרה לאמר האף אמנם אלד ואני זקנתי:] (18:13; emphasis added).

In other words, both Abraham and Sarah laughed and said to themselves, "Shall

Sarah bear a child?"[2] This juxtaposition is useful and effective for the readers to perceive

Abraham's and Sarah's attitudes toward God about their childlessness and also to

acknowledge association between 18:1–15 and the previous chapter.[3] On the other hand,

the researcher, as discussed in Chapter 6, observes Abraham's and Sarah's attitudes

toward God in parallel with Lot's attitudes toward the angels (19:16).

Conclusion

Therefore, the author articulates that this unit (18:1–15) functions not only as the

introduction to this larger unit (18:1–33) parallel with Abraham's and Lot's hospitality to

the men (18:1–8; 19:1–11), but also as the conclusion of God's announcement of

Abraham's heir (chaps 15–18). In Chapter 6, the researcher will discuss God's final

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[2] The author employs Hebrew word ילד (bear a child) first of all in Sarah's speech in predicament of her childlessness (16:2), although the narrator employs it for referring to Sarah's childless (16:1), and also at the end in Sarah's speech from divine inner focalization (18:13). On the other hand, as far as Abraham's speech to God is concerned, it is conducted in doubts and complaints to God about childlessness (15:2, 3, 8; 17:17, 18). That is to say, both of Abraham and Sarah kept weigh down with childlessness even by the last moment when the divine announcement is revealed (18:10, 14). See also Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1982), 157–162; John H. Walton, *Genesis*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 453–454. Kinlaw provides theological and spiritual insights about their deceit and unbelief and says, "It is interesting that both of these people are capable of deceit. Having deepening faith does not guarantee spiritual maturity or entirely right behavior. It certainly ought to lead to those, but they are not requirements for getting in." Dennis F. Kinlaw, *Lectures in Old Testament Theology: Yahweh Is God Alone*, ed. John N. Oswalt (Wilmore, KY: Francis Asbury Society, 2010), 139–141. Hamilton, however, insists that Sarah's laughter is not for disbelief. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18–50*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 13.

[3] See also Cotter, *Genesis*, 113–115.

announcement to Abraham about Sarah's birth of a son in context (17:15–21; 18:9–15),

with the angels' announcement to Lot about salvation of him and his family out of the

midst of God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (19:12–16).
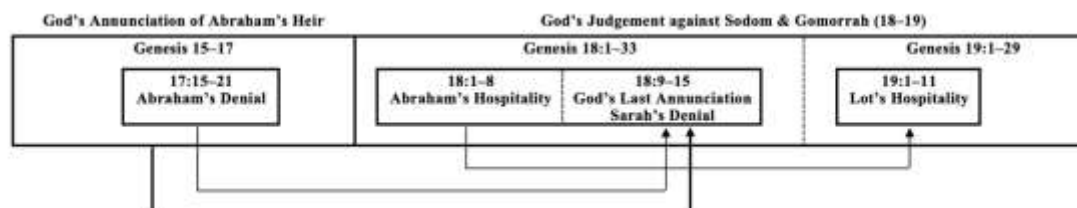
Figure 5.1. Genesis 18:1–15 in context

God's Introspection about the Covenantal Relationship with Abraham (18:16–19)

Literary Framework in Context (18:16, 22)

The author opens this unit with the men's movement from location, which is

referred to the previous section, towards Sodom, and Abraham's action with the men

(18:16) by using this parallel syntactic form (18:22):

> Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And
> Abraham went with them to set them on their way. (*wayyāqumû **miššām
> hāʾᵃnāšim** wayyašqipû ʿal-pᵉne sᵉd̠ōm wᵉʾab̠rahām hōlek̠ ʿimmām lᵉšallᵉḥām:*
> [ויקמו משם האנשים וישקפו על־פני סדם ואברהם הלך עמם לשלחם:]) (18:16; emphasis
> added);
> So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood
> before the LORD (*wayyipnû **miššām hāʾᵃnāšim** wayyelk̠û sᵉd̠ōmâ wᵉʾab̠rahām
> ʿôd̠ennû ʿōmed̠ lip̠ne yhwh:* [ויפנו משם האנשים וילכו סדמה ואברהם עודנו עמד לפני יהוה:])
> (18:22; emphasis added).

In short, the author clarifies the introduction to each unit by designing this parallel

frame.[4] Also, through the actions of the men and Abraham's in this parallel syntactic

form, the reader sees the subject shifting location in this section: from the men who "set

out and looked down" (18:16) to the men who "turned and went" (18:22), and from

Abraham who "went with them to set them on their way" (18:16) to Abraham who "stood

before the LORD" (18:22).

God's Interior Monologue as Inner Focalization (18:17–19)

The author relates God's interior monologue after the men looked down toward

Sodom (18:16) and reveals the reason for God's hiding from Abraham what He is about

to do (18:17) (that is, judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah [18:20–21]): God's

covenantal relationship with Abraham (18:18–19).

The use of God's interior monologue plays an effective and influential role in

communicating His own messages to the reader, because it provides the reader with inner

focalization of the highest character, God Himself in the Biblical narrative. In short, the

author draws the reader's attention to God's inner feelings and thoughts without God's

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[4] Cotter mentions 18:16 serves an extremely important function in the development of the plot as "a maker to introduce the principal theme that will concern the remainder of the narrative" while 18:22 serves as "another marker, drawing the action ever nearer to Sodom." Cotter, *Genesis*, 119–120. Walsh also analyzes Gen 18:16, 22 as framing inclusion. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, 65.

direct speech to the human character Abraham, who cannot know them, through interior

monologue from God's inner focalization.[5]

One can compare God's interior monologue with the ones in Abraham and Sarah

(17:17; 18:12). Abraham's and Sarah's interior monologues, however, are inconsistent

with God's, because God as a character in the narrative can also see through and know

Abraham's and Sarah's inner feelings and thoughts articulated in their interior

monologues, can the author and the reader (17:19; 18:13), but the human characters do

not do so. Hence, since divine interior monologue from God's inner focalization comes to

the fore in the Biblical narrative, rather than human ones, the reader can perceive the

significant message that God's covenantal relationship with Abraham is established so

intimately, reliably, and even influentially as to drive Himself into introspection.[6]

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[5] Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18–50*, 17. Brueggemann remarks that divine interior monologue represents "an extravagant credentialing of Abraham, perhaps the most extravagant of all of scripture." Walter Brueggemann, "A Shape for Old Testament Theology, II: Embrace of Pain," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1985): 409. Michael also argues about the significance in the literary function of this divine monologue. Matthew Michael, *Yahweh's Elegant Speeches of Abrahamic Narratives: A Study of the Stylistics, Characterizations, and Functions of the Divine Speeches in Abrahamic Narratives* (Cumbria: Langham Monographs, 2014), 202–203. Cotter notes that what God says interiorly and what he says aloud to Abraham are markedly different, while he points that the previous two divine interior monologues (Gen 6:5–7; 11:6–7) are different in that they have bearing with the decision to destroy. Cotter, *Genesis*, 119.

[6] Hamilton emphasizes Hebrew word *zakhar* (זכר) implies God's covenantal relationship with Abraham. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18–50*, 18. Huffmon surveys that *yāḏaʿ* (ידע) is used in reference to "covenant recognition of Israel by Yahweh" and refers to "the vassal's 'knowing' the suzerain, i.e., to Israel's recognizing Yahweh as its (sole) legitimate God." Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew Yāda'," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 181 (1966): 34–37. Eichrodt argues that *yāḏaʿ* (ידע) describes "the responsive love and trustful surrender awakened by the unmerited love of God." Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. John A. Baker, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), 290–294. See also G. Johannes Botterweck and Jan Bergman, "יָדַע," *TDOT* 5: 468–481; Terence E. Fretheim, "יָדַע," *NIDOTTE* 2:409–414; Cotter, *Genesis*, 119.

Through the contrast of human and divine interior monologues, the author communicates

to the reader the significance of God's covenantal relationship with Abraham.

God's Inner Focalization in 18:17–19 and Narrator's Summary in 19:29

As far as God's inner focalization is concerned, the author later refers to it as

summarized in 19:29: "God remembered Abraham" (*wayyizkōr ʾelōhim ʾet̠-ʾab̠rahām*

[ויזכר אלהים את־אברהם]). Since the Hebrew word *zakhar* (זכר) "remember" as God's

conduct frequently connotes God's covenantal relationship in Pentateuchal narrative

(Gen 8:1; 9:15, 16; 30:22; Exod 2:24; 6:5; 32:13; 6:5; Lev 26:42; 26:45),[7] this abstract

and recapturable reference to God's remembrance of Abraham (19:29) is a reminder to

the reader of God's introspection of His covenantal relationship with Abraham (18:17–

19).[8] As a result, the author also shows a literary structural connection between this unit

(18:17–19) and the following unit (19:1–28) with this divine focalization.[9]

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[7] G. Hasel, "זָעַק," *TDOT* 4:112–122; A. H. Konkel, "זָעַק," *NIDOTTE* 1:1131–1132

[8] Alter also refers to God's reflection on His covenantal relationship with Abraham and moreover indicates that it has a bearing on the role of prophet, which the researcher will prove later on. Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 80.

[9] Mathews remarks that only divine remembrance of Abraham, in short God's covenantal relationship with Abraham brought Lot into salvation. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 1B:242–243. However, the researcher surveys later Abraham's intercession also involves God's intervention in Lot's salvation.

God's Announcement of Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:20–21)

After God's introspection (18:17–19), the author relates that the LORD announces to Abraham what He is about to do as His response to His own self-question (18:17): God's judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah due to their sins (18:20–21).[10] The author attempts to remind the reader of the former exposition as a foreshadowing about Sodom and Gomorrah, the existence of sins (*chaṭṭaʾ* [חטא]) (13:10, 13), and even Lot himself. The reader also notices that the story of Abraham and Lot has reached its climax. In that sense, the reader must anticipate the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (13:10; 19:1–29).

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[10] Wenham argues God's revealing His secrets to Abraham as one of characteristics of the true prophet (cf. Amos 3:7), which the researcher will discuss. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 2:50; See also Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18–50*, 17.

Conclusion

The author frames the introduction with a syntactic form that positions the men's

and Abraham's actions, in parallel to the next unit (18:16; 18:22). The author emphasizes

that God's covenantal relationship with Abraham is so significant as to drive God

Himself into introspection and revelation of His secret from Him. The reader perceives

this through God's interior monologue representing inner focalization (18:17–19), which

is bound up with reference to God's remembrance of Abraham (19:29). The author

reminds the reader of God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, their wickedness and

sins, and even Lot himself in relation to them (13:10, 13), and also announces to the

reader the climax of the Abraham-Lot narrative (18:20–21).
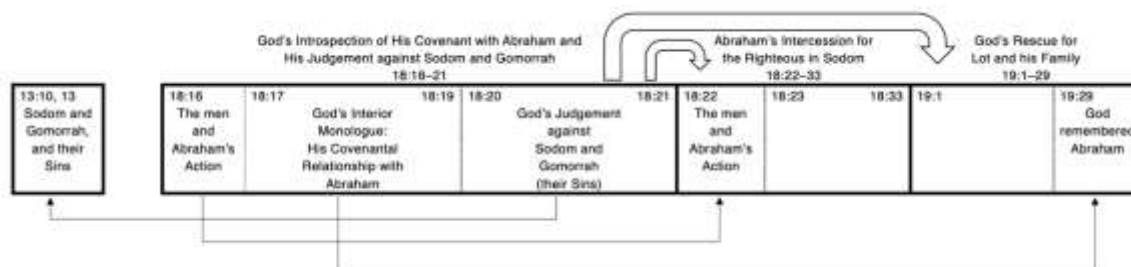
Figure 5.2. Genesis 18:16–21 in context

Abraham's Intercession for the Righteous in Sodom as His Prophetic Ministry (18:22–33)

Literary Framework in Context (18:22, 33; 19:27)

As mentioned in the introduction of the previous unit (18:16), the author sets out this unit with the men turning away from where they were and going toward Sodom, and Abraham's standing before the LORD. The author also begins with the two angels' arrival instead of the men's at Sodom in the evening at 19:1, as an introduction to the following unit.

On the other hand, the reference to Abraham's standing before the LORD (18:22), ends in his returning home (18:33). In fact, the author brackets both Abraham's intercession for the righteous in Sodom (18:22–33) and God's rescue of Lot in Sodom and His judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah (19:1–26). Or, to put it differently, the author describes Abraham's intercession for the righteous in Sodom (18:22–33) as bound up with God's rescue of Lot in Sodom and His judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah (19:1–26).
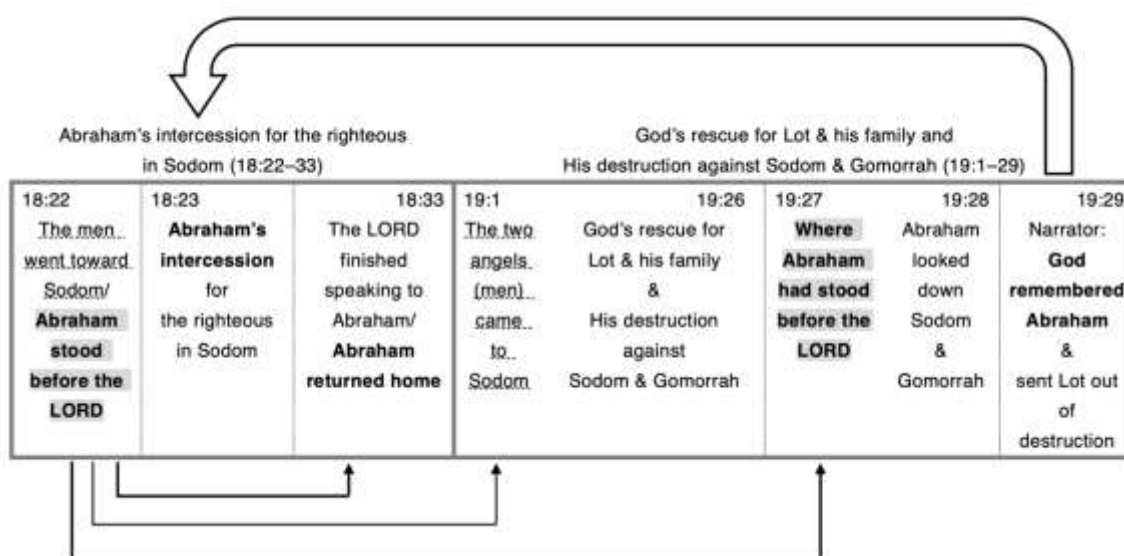
Figure 5.3. Genesis 18:22–33 in context

'Stand' (ʿamad [עמד]) and 'draw near' (nagash [נגש]) in 18:22, 23

The author delineates Abraham's manner in which he begins intercession with the
LORD with two kinds of Hebrew verbal words: 'stand' (v. 22, ʿamad [עמד]) and 'draw
near' (v. 23, nagash [נגש]). When these Hebrew words are used with a specific object the
LORD, God in the Old Testament, it can be seen that they often are given prophetic role
to the subject character Abraham.

For example, Moses played a prophetic role between the people of Israel and
God. The author narrates that God reminded Moses that "you [Moses] stood before the
LORD your God at Horeb" (*ʿāmaḏtā lipne yhwh ʾelōheḵā beḥōreḇ* [עמדת לפני יהוה אלהיך
בחרב]) (Deut 4:10; emphasis added). When the Israelites fell into idolatry, God relented
of His judgment through Moses' intercession (Exod 32:11–14; cf. Num 17:13). The
LORD said to Jeremiah, "…Moses and Samuel stood before me [the LORD] …"
(*yaʿămōḏ mōšê ûšemûʾel lepānay* [...יעמד משה ושמואל לפני]) (Jer 15:1; emphasis added).
Samuel also interceded with God for idolatry of the Israelites (1 Sam 7:5–9; cf. 1 Sam
8:6; 12:23; 15:11). The prophets Elijah and Elisha identified themselves and proclaimed,
"As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand" (*ḥay-yhwh ʾelōhe yiśrāʾel*

ᵃšer ʿāmaḏti lᵉpānāyw [חי־יהוה אלהי ישראל אשר עמדתי לפניו]) (1Kings 17:1; 18:15; 2 Kings

3:14; 5:16; emphasis added).[11]

The Biblical writer mentions, "Moses alone shall come [draw] near to the LORD

(wᵉniggaš mōšê lᵉḇaddô ʾel-yhwh [ונגש משה לבדו אל־יהוה]), but the others shall not come

near, and the people shall not come up with him" (Exod 24:2; emphasis added; cf. Exod

20:21). It can be seen that when Elijah speaks to the LORD, the writer of 1 Kings

employs the same syntactic phrase in Genesis: "Elijah the prophet came near and said"

(wayyiggaš ʾeliahû hannāḇiʾ wayyōʾmar [ויגש עליהו הנביא ויאמר]) (1 Kings 18:36;

emphasis added); "Abraham drew near and said" (wayyiggaš ʾaḇrahām wayyōʾmar [ויגש

אברהם ויאמר]) (Gen 18:23; emphasis added).

As a result, the author portrays Abraham's intercession as prophetic ministry at

the beginning by using these Hebrew verbs: 'stand' (ʿamad [עמד]) and 'draw near'

(nagash [נגש]). This means that the reader may anticipate the efficacy of Abraham's

intercession as prophetic ministry, like Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha. Also these

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[11] Helmer Ringgren, "עָמַד," *TDOT* 11:178–187; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18–50*, 23; Matthews argues that Abraham's standing before the LORD represents the juridical appeal of the patriarch. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 1B:226–227.

words, in context, signify that Abraham's covenantal relationship with God is so

trustworthy and effective as for him to be able to stand before and draw near God.[12]

<div align="center">Abraham's Intercession in Context (13:10, 13; 14:12–16; 18:23–32)</div>

The author's portrayal of Lot's approach to Sodom in danger of God's destruction

of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Sodomites' wickedness, as already discussed, draws the

reader's attention to Lot himself (13:10, 13) as well as to Abraham, a main character in

the narrative. In this context, the author describes Lot who dwelled in Sodom as a

supporting character, a captive involved in the war, and Abraham as a warrior to rescue

him from the adversaries (14:12–16).[13]

The author, however, does not describe Abraham as a warrior to rescue Lot in

danger of God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, but rather as a prophet to rescue

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[12] The author, in fact, does not begin the prophetic implication of Abraham from 18:22–23, but rather has already done it in chapter 15, although explicitly identifying Abraham as a prophet in 20:7. Wenham surveys Abraham's prophetic role from historical perspective. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 2:44. Sailhamer investigates three prophetic elements in this chapter: (1) The author uses emphatic and typical prophetic formula to describe theophany through the word of God: "the word of the LORD came to Abraham" (*dᵉḇar-yhwh ʾel-ʾaḇrām* [היה דבר־יהוה אל־אברם]) (15:1); (2) theophany has been done "in a vision" (*bammaḥᵃzê* [במחזה]) (15:1) which occurs not only here but also in the prophecies of Balaam (Num 24:4, 16; cf. Ezek 13:7); (3) God announces events that will happen far in the future (vv. 13–16). Sailhamer, "Genesis," 168–169. Moreover, Hamilton adds another: (4) the formula "Fear not" (*ʾal-tirāʾ* [אל־תירא]) also occurs frequently in Old Testament through a prophetic spokesman. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, 417–418. Therefore, the author has clarified Abraham's credentials as a prophet through those syntactic and lexical features in chapter 15 and articulates more practical prophetic ministry of Abraham's intercession for the righteous in Sodom (18:22–32).

[13] Wenham analyzes chapter 14 as "an indispensable stepping stone between chap. 13 and chap. 18." Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 1:306.

Lot through intercession (18:23–32)[14] Given Abraham as a prophet rather than a warrior

in the context of the Abraham-Lot relationship, the attentive reader would realize that

Abraham nevertheless must have kept Lot in mind as part of his intercession with God for

salvation of the righteous in Sodom (19:24, 26), although he did not refer to Lot in his

intercession.

Abraham's Speech in Context

The author describes Abraham's inner feelings and thoughts from his internal

focalization, since the narrator relates them through Abraham's speech of intercession.

Abraham's speech itself, in dialogue with God, does not occur frequently in narrative

(Table 5.2). Specifically, most of Abraham's speeches are overwhelmed by negative

perceptions such as anxiety, fear, doubts, and complaints about "God's delay in fulfilling

his promises,"[15] while Abraham's intercession represents his interest in salvation of the

righteous in Sodom.[16] Therefore, Abraham's speech of intercession plays positive and

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[14] Sailhamer, "Genesis," 165; Kinlaw, *Lectures in Old Testament Theology: Yahweh Is God Alone*, 145. Gentry and Wellum discusses that Abraham intercedes "as a priest for the nations on the basis of God's own character." Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenant* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 283.

[15] Sailhamer also develops theological insights through parallel of Abraham's situation with Jeremiah. Sailhamer, "Genesis," 169.

[16] Sailhamer, "Genesis," 194. Brueggemann argues that in the flood story the theological innovation was about "the pain in the heart of God," while here "the innovation concerns God's valuing the righteous more than craving the destruction of the unrighteous." Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 169–170.

significant role in the narrative context and specifically clarifies his inner feelings and

thoughts from internal focalization.[17] It follows that the reader encounters Abraham

dramatically and spiritually as transformed and mature through the development of his

speech to God in the narrative.

Table 5.2. Abraham's speech to God in the narrative

Genesis	Features
15:2, 3, 8	Abraham's anxiety, fear, doubts, and complaints about God's delay in
17:17, 18	fulfilling His promise
18:23–32	Abraham's vindication of the righteous in Sodom through intercession
22:1, 11	Abraham's obedient response

In this sense, when encountering the narrator's summary later that "God

remembered (*wayyizkōr* [ויזכר]) Abraham" (19:29), the reader would perceive that what

God remembered in Abraham is Abraham's intercession (18:23–32; Table 5.2) as well as

God's covenantal relationship with Abraham in His own introspection (18:17–19).

Therefore, the author elucidates so significant a role of Abraham as a prophet (18:23–32),

as well as a covenantal counterpart (18:17–19), as to drive God to rescue Lot from God's

destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (19:1–26).

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[17] Berlin points to direct speech as "the most dramatic way of conveying the characters' internal psychological and ideological points of view." Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 64.

Conclusion

The author designs an introduction (18:22), in relation to the previous unit

(18:16), from two points of views: the men's and Abraham's actions. The men's actions

are followed by an introduction to the following unit (19:1), while Abraham's actions

have relevance not only to the end of this unit (18:33) but also to 19:27, which frames

two units (18:23–33; 19:1–26).

The author's employment of "stand" (ʿamad [עמד]) and "draw near" (nagash

[נגש]) implies Abraham's role as a prophet like Moses, Samuel, and Elijah, since the

prophetic features for him occurred in chapter 15. Furthermore, Abraham is described as

a prophet who pleads with God for salvation of the righteous in Sodom in comparison to

a warrior rescuing Lot from an adversary (Gen 14). This makes allusion to Lot among the

righteous in Sodom, for whom Abraham interceded, in view of the Abraham-Lot

relationship in the narrative context.

The author portrays Abraham as a prophet in his speech of intercession (18:23–

32), as opposed to Abraham's previous speeches (Gen 15, 17), and also makes it bound

up with the reason for God's rescue of Lot: "God remembered Abraham" (19:29) from

internal focalization. In this way, the author establishes Abraham's role as a prophet

(18:23–32) as well as a covenantal counterpart (18:17–19) and indicates that the

foundation of the relationship between Abraham and Lot is through Abraham's prophetic

intercession.

Despite his absence in the intercession narrative, Lot, as one of the righteous in

Sodom, drives Abraham to intercede with the Lord for rescue in the midst of destruction

of Sodom and Gomorrah. As a result, Lot plays a significant role as a supporting

character, a foil of Abraham.

CHAPTER 6

LOT IN THE NARRATIVE OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH:
LOT'S FIFTH AND SIXTH APPEARANCE (19:1–38)

Literary Structure in Time and Space (19:1–38)

The researcher will attempt to analyze the literary structure which the author of

the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah designed stylistically and aesthetically for the

reader to better understand where and what he/she should be interested in. For this

analysis in 19:1–29, the following literary components are significant: time and space in

the narrative, dramatic irony, and symmetrical patterns, specifically reverse symmetry

(concentric and chiastic structure) so that the researcher can clarify the literary structure.[1]

Literary Structure in Time (19:1–38)

The author adopts a representation of time and space so that the reader will

understand the development of the plot. It can be seen that there are some specific

representations of temporal relations: "In the evening" (*bāʿereḇ* [בערב]) in v. 1, "As

morning dawned" (*ûḵᵉmô haššaḥar ʿālâ* [וכמו השחר עלה]) in v. 15, "The sun had risen on

the earth" (*haššemeš yāṣāʾ ʿal-hāʾāreṣ* [השמש יצא על־הארץ]) in v. 23, and "early in the

morning" (*wayyaškem ʾaḇrahām babbōqer* [וישכם אברהם בבקר]) in v. 27. In *Narrative Art*

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[1] Walsh declares "The possible variations of symmetrical patterning afford the Biblical Hebrew narrator a flexible tool not only for integrating and organizing a literary unit, but for directing the reader's interpretive attention as well." In this sense, it is significant to detect the symmetrical patterns in the narrative. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, 8.

in the Bible, Bar-Efrat emphasizes that internal time is "an invaluable constituent of the

structure of the narrative," and that "apart from its role within the narrative itself, such as

providing emphases or implying connections between separate incidents, narrated time

can fulfill direct functions for the reader, such as creating suspense or determining

attitudes."[2] He argues that internal time allows the reader not only to understand the

structure of the narrative but also to be able to read the narrative dynamically and

thoughtfully.

<div align="center">Duration of Time in 18:1–19:28</div>

The analysis of duration is useful to understand the significance of the scenes

(19:12–22) on which the author focuses in the symmetrical structure, as well as the

significance of the dialogue between God and Abraham (18:16–33).

Duration is called the "speed" of a narrative. An analysis of duration can be

conducted by comparing the length of time an event actually took to occur, called "story-

time" (narrated time) with the length of time devoted to the narration of this event in the

narrative text, called "text-time" (narration time). Text-time is indicated in terms of

number of lines in the Hebrew texts (totally 61 lines in 18:1–19:28), while the story-time

is reconstructed from the narrative text in terms of hours due to the temporal relations:

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[2] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 142.

"In the heat of the day" (18:1), "In the evening" (19:1), "Before they lay down" (19:4), "As morning dawned" (19:15), "The sun had risen on the earth" (19:23), and "Early in the morning" (19:27). All the events in 18:1–19:28 took approximately a whole day (about 22 hours) to occur.[3] Through analysis of both types of duration, the reader can see what events chiefly interest the author in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. Duration in 18:1–19:28

Genesis	Events	TT	ST
18:1–8	Abraham's hospitality to the angels	8 lines	3 hours
18:9–15	God's announcement of the birth of Isaac	7 lines	1 hour
18:16–33	God's introspection and Abraham's intercession	18 lines	1 hour
19:1–3	Lot's hospitality to the angels	3 lines	3 hours
19:4–14	Lot's safeguard for the angels	11 lines	8 hours
19:15–22	Angels' rescue of Lot and his family	8 lines	2 hours
19:23	Lot's arrival at Zoar	1 line	A moment
19:24–25	God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	2 lines	2 hours
19:26	Lot's wife looking back and becoming a pillar of salt	1 line	A moment
19:27–28	Abraham's observation on destruction of the valley	2 lines	1 hour

a The highlight indicates the author's chief interest in the literary structure.
b TT=text-time; ST=story-time

It follows accordingly that the author's chief interest is in God's introspection and Abraham's intercession (18:16–33) in 18:1–19:28. When observed in each chapter, it is

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[3] Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, 93–99; Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), 86–112. Cotter estimates it as eighteen-hour period. Cotter, *Genesis*, 115.

in the angels' rescue of Lot and his family (19:15–22). This corresponds to the author's

interest or statements in 19:29, which represent a summary of 18:1–19:28.

Literary Structure in Space (19:1–38)

The reader also notes that the author employs not only temporal but also spatial

relations: inside and outside the house (19:1–14), inside and outside the city (19:15–22),

and inside and outside the valley (19:23–28).[4] Furthermore, the author portrays the

movement of characters from one space to another and attempts to communicate to the

reader "a sense of the existence of space" through the movement of characters in space by

the narrator.[5] In fact, the author emphasizes the meaning of space through the movement

of characters such as the angels, Lot, and his family: safe space is protected physically

and by the angels inside the house, outside the city, in Zoar, outside the valley (the hills);

dangerous space involved in the Sodomites' wickedness and God's destruction is found

outside the house, inside the city, inside the valley. See Figure 6.1, Figure 6.2, Figure 6.3,

and Figure 6.4.

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[4] Bal surveys the important role of spatial elements in the narrative and mentions, "A contrast between inside and outside is often relevant, where inside may carry the suggestion of protection, and outside that of danger." Moreover, she emphasizes the significance of special oppositions in relation to structure, and denotes, "When several places, ordered in groups, can be related to psychological, ideological, and moral oppositions, location may function as an important principle of structure." This is true of Genesis 19. Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 219–222. See also Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 70–71.

[5] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 185.
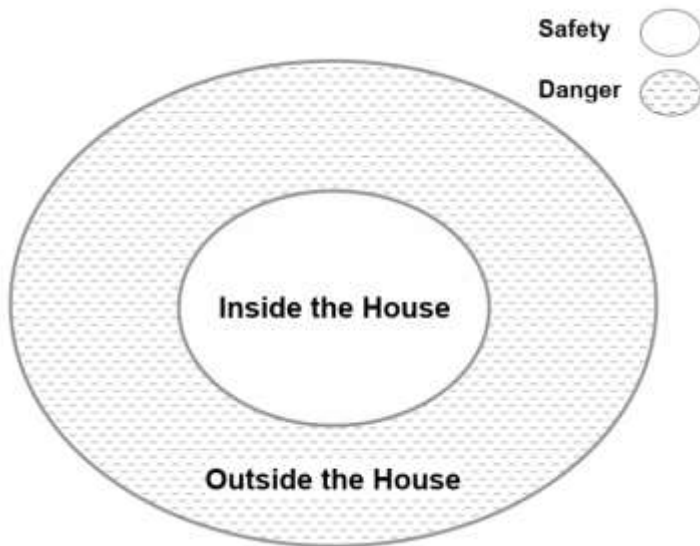
Figure 6.1. Safe and dangerous spaces in 19:1–14
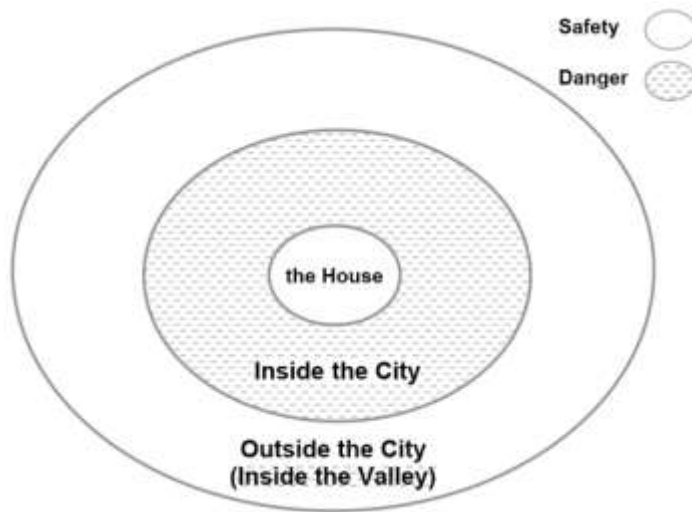
Figure 6.2. Safe and dangerous spaces in 19:15–22
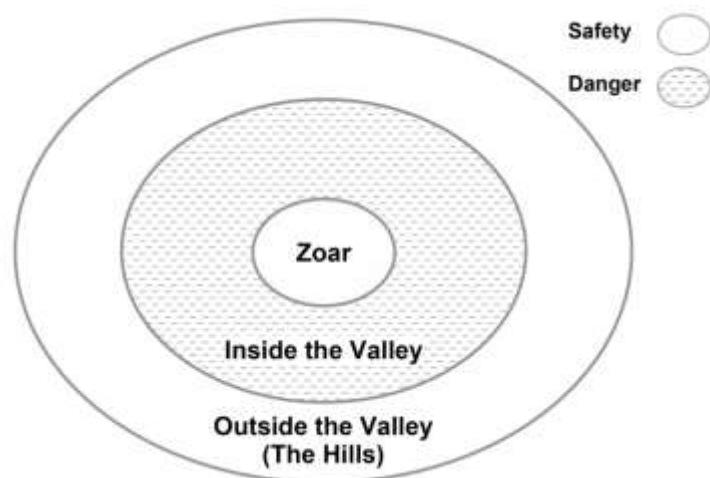
Figure 6.3. Safe and dangerous spaces in 19:23–28
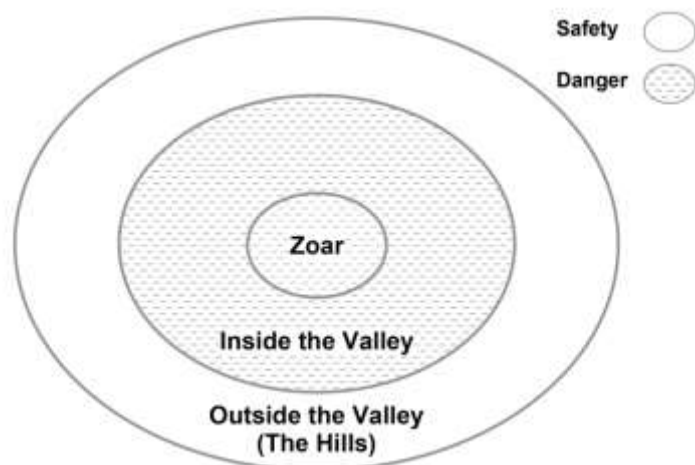
Figure 6.4. Safe and dangerous spaces in 19:30–38

Many of the character's movements in space that are described in the narratives,
are, as Bar-Efrat puts it, "more or less marginal to the plot, but in some of them
movement constitutes a central structural element, serving as the focal point of the plot."[6]
In this sense, the character's movements in space serve to identify the literary structure
for the reader.

Table 6.2. Time and space transition in 19:1–38

Genesis 19	Content	Space	Order	Time
1–3	Lot's hospitality to the angels	Outside/Inside the House	1	In the evening
4–5	The Sodomites' brutality to the angels	Outside the House	2	
6–8	Lot's safeguard for the angels against the Sodomites			
9	The Sodomites' brutality to the angels and Lot			
10–11	The angels' safeguard for Lot against the Sodomites	Inside/Outside the House	3	
12–13	The angels' sentence on destruction and proclamation of salvation to Lot and his family	Inside the House		
14	Lot's sentence on destruction and proclamation of salvation to his sons-in-law	Outside the House	4	
15–16	The angels' rescue of Lot and his family (1)	Inside the House (Inside the City)	5	At dawn
17–22	The angels' rescue of Lot and his family (2)	Outside the City (Inside the Valley)	6	
23	Lot in Zoar	Inside Zoar	7	The sun had risen on the earth
24–25	God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (the valley)	Inside the Valley (Outside Zoar)	8	
26	Lot's wife in the valley (a pillar of salt)			
27–28	Abraham's verification of God's response and judgment	Outside the Valley (the Hills)	9	Early in the morning
29	Narrator's comment	–	–	–
30–38	The birth of the Moabites and the Ammonites	Zoar/the Hills (in a Cave)	10	Day/Night

a The highlight is danger space indicated in Figure 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4.

b Order number is arranged for Figure 6.5.

In this way, the author elucidates the temporal and spatial framework, and the

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[6] Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 185–187.

reader can pursue characters according to the narrative development in time and space.

The researcher investigated time and space transition in 19:1–38 to clarify the literary

structure (Table 6.2) and then illustrated the scenic transition map following order

number in Table 6.2. to increase understanding of the visual and dramatic development of

the narrative (Figure 6.5).
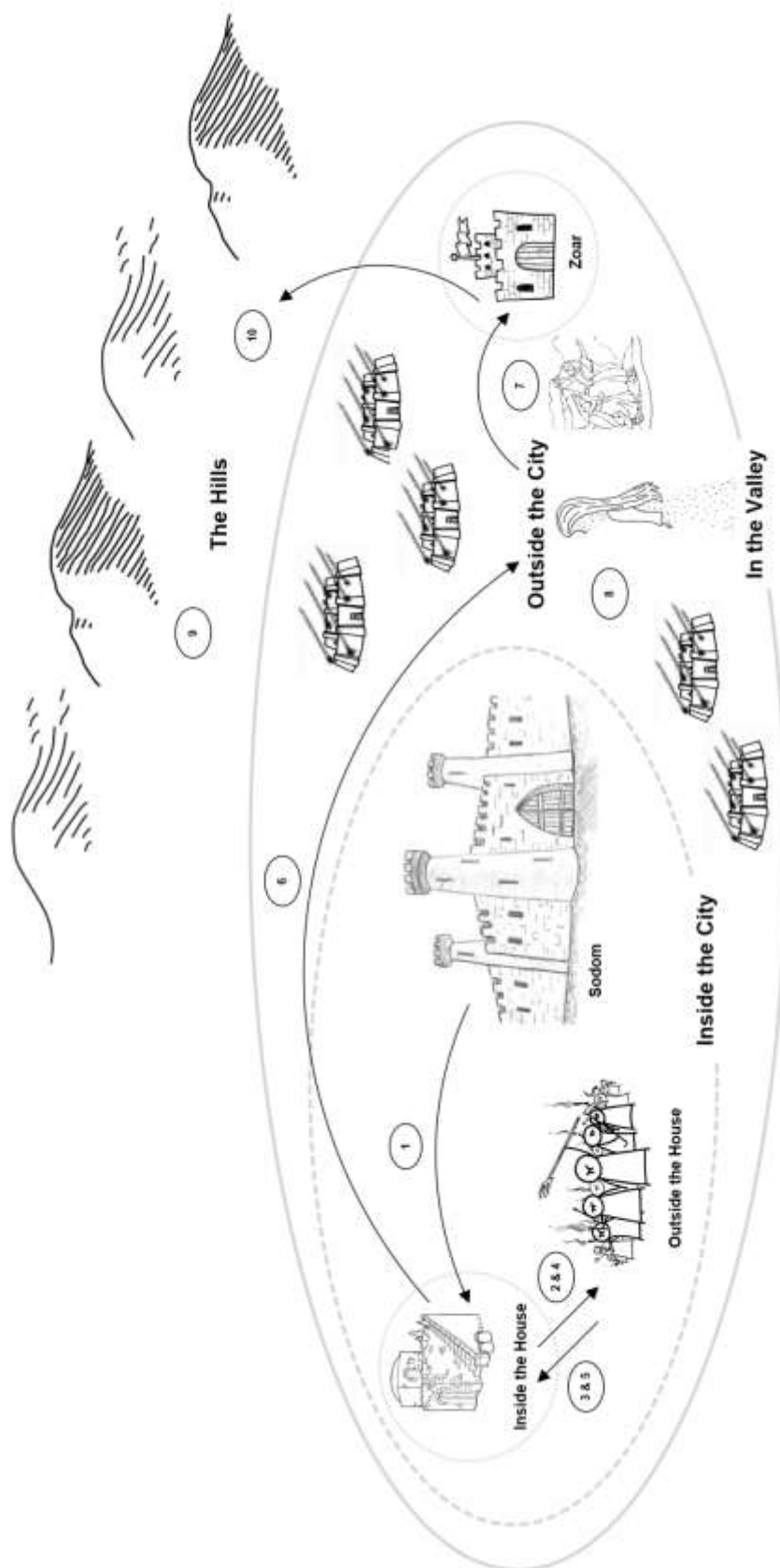
Figure 6.5. Scenic transition map in 19:1–38
* Order number is followed in Table 6.2

In addition to time and space, the researcher also surveyed characters and characterization, and outlined the literary structure in 19:1–29, as follows:

A. Lot's hospitality to and the Sodomites' brutality against the angels (vv. 1–11)

B. The angels' and Lot's warning of salvation and destruction (vv. 12–14)

C. The angels' warning of escape to and rescue of Lot and his family (vv. 15–22)

D. God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 23–26)

E. Abraham's vindication of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 27–28)

F. Narrator's Summary and Comment (v. 29)

Lot's Fifth Appearance (19:1–29)

Lot's Hospitality to and the Sodomites' Brutality Against the Angels (19:1–11)

Some scholars focus on parallels between Lot's hospitality to the angels and Abraham's hospitality to the visitors with negative perception, since some representations are similar but different (18:1–8).[7] The researcher, however, examines how the author describes Lot's and the Sodomites' behaviors to the angels in this scenic framework,

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[7] Sharon Pace Jeansonne, "The Characterization of Lot in Genesis," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 18, no. 4 (1988): 123–129. Waltke also surveys Abraham's and Lot's hospitality to the men in contrast, while he, at the same time, investigates Abraham and the Sodomites' hospitality in contrast. He even discusses Lot's wife in comparison to Abraham's wife Sarah. Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 273–274.

since the author clarifies representations sharply contrasted between Lot's and the

Sodomites' behaviors to the angels in the symmetrical structure (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3. Concentric structure in 19:1–11

A.	19:1–3	Lot's safeguard for and hospitality to the angels	(Outside/Inside)
B.	19:4–5	The Sodomites' brutality against the angels	(Outside)
C.	19:6–8	Lot's safeguard for the angels against the Sodomites	(Outside)
B'.	19:9	The Sodomites' brutality against the angels and Lot	(Outside)
A'.	19:10–11	The angels' safeguard for Lot against the Sodomites	(Inside/Outside)

This structure discloses that the author's interest is placed in the central part:

Lot's safeguard for and hospitality to the angels against the Sodomites (vv. 6–8).[8] In this

reverse symmetry, Lot offers hospitality to the angels so that he protects the angels inside

his house to avoid the danger of their staying outside overnight due to the wicked in

Sodom (vv. 1–3), while the angels, ironically, bring Lot from the outside to the inside of

his house so that they protect him from the mob of the Sodomites in the last scene (vv.

10–11).

The Sodomites never offer hospitality to but rather exhibit wicked and brutal

behavior towards the angels, and even towards Lot, so that they take acts and speeches in

defiance against them. The author suggests that their corruption, wickedness, and

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[8] Walsh makes a distinction between concentric and chiastic in reverse symmetry. The former is a single-centered structure (schematized ABCB'A'), while the latter a double-centered structure (ABCC'B'A'). The researcher follows his distinction. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, 13–14.

sinfulness are getting worse, first against the angels (vv. 4–5) and second against both the

angels and Lot (v.9).

In the central part (vv. 6–8), the author describes how Lot strives to safeguard

the angels from the mob of Sodomites in his best and most honest hospitality. Lot does

not even try to stay inside his house but rather has the courage to go outside and even

shuts the door after him and bargains with the mob to safeguard the angels at the risk of

his own daughters.[9]

Surely the fact that Lot jeopardizes his daughters to negotiate with the Sodomites

may be ethically controversial, but he must also play a role as a host according to his

cultural convention.[10] In that sense, the author focuses on the last word in Lot's speech,

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[9] Licht argues that the "historical" aspect in the Old Testament is to collect the true facts and reveal their significance, while the storytelling aspect in the Old Testament has aesthetic qualities as a vehicle to convey these things, and that moral value is "a frequent by-product of mimesis" in the storytelling, as he agrees with what Gunkel thought: Many aspectss of the patriarchal characters were "a source of pleasure or of inspiration" in the legends of Genesis. Therefore, he concludes that "showing people as they are is a mimetic feature, and hence belongs to aesthetics rather than to ethics… the artist's view of human behaviour is wiser than the moralizer's." Licht premises that "the Bible does not mind showing flaws in the characters of the people it tells about. The point is made in a *midrash*, though in a somewhat different context." The researcher also assumes that this is true of Lot's ethical reaction to the mob of the Sodomites at the cost of his daughters or his daughters' ethical action for his descendants (offspring): incest with their father Lot (19:30–38). Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible*, 16–18; Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 111–116. As far as the context in the narrative is concerned, the reader encounters the fact that Lot had only two ethical options: Lot's ethical choice to try to sacrifice his daughters or to offer his guests, the angels, to the mob in this urgent and critical situation. In this sense, the researcher suspects that this falls into an ethical dilemma like the Trolley Problem for most modern readers.

[10] Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*, 85. Kinlaw insists on the Biblical character's anthropological and cultural humanity as 'an incredibly human mortal' in Abraham and remarks "Abraham was living in his own world and was a part of that world." This is true of Lot, too. Kinlaw, *Lectures in Old Testament Theology: Yahweh Is God Alone*, 149–150.

"Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof" (v. 8).

Specifically, since the word "for" (*ki-ʿal-ken* [כִּי־עַל־כֵּן]) with the notion of causality is

composed of two Hebrew words *ki* (כִּי) and *ʿal-ken* (עַל־כֵּן),[11] this Hebrew locution,

Wenham puts it, "serves here to underline how committed Lot is to protecting his guests.

Putting their welfare above his daughters' may have been questionable, but it shows just

how committed he was to being a good host."[12] However in spite of doing his best and

making efforts to safeguard the angels from the wickedness of the Sodomites, Lot could

not protect them but rather found them protecting him from the mob's brutality.

In the final analysis, the researcher summarizes this scene using a concentric

structure with four key points, as follows: First, the author shows that Lot's hospitality to

and safeguard for the angels are so consistent as to jeopardize his daughters. Hospitality

is one of the characteristics in the righteous and is carried out by Abraham, too (18:1–8).

Alexander concludes in his survey that "Lot's hospitality is a mark of his righteousness,"

as it is with Abraham.[13] As Alexander puts it, "If Abraham is primarily concerned for

Lot, he feels obliged to posit his case for Lot's deliverance not on the grounds of kinship

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[11] Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006), 654.

[12] Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 2:55–56.

[13] T. Desmond Alexander, "Lot's Hospitality: A Clue to His Righteousness," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104/2 (1985): 290.

but rather on the grounds of righteousness—a fact highlighted by the recurrence of the term *ṣaddîq* ("righteous") in vv. 22–28."[14] One can see that Lot's hospitality is commensurate with the righteous Abraham. Therefore, the author draws the reader's attention to Lot's hospitality to the angels in contrast with the Sodomites' brutality and emphasizes, through concentric structure, that Lot represents one of the righteous for whom Abraham interceded (18:22–32).

Second, the Sodomites' rejection of and brutality towards Lot and the angels, on the other hand, causes the reader to identify how serious, critical, abominable, and incorrigible their wickedness is; in a word, their complete depravity (vv. 4–5, 9). As a result, the reader can see the Sodomites as disqualified from salvation.

Third, although Lot's attempts to protect the angels from the Sodomites comes to naught, the reader also might be able to hear his speech itself against the Sodomites (vv. 7–8) at least as a part of the outcry of the righteous in oppression and affliction, referred to in 18:20, 21, and 19:13. In this sense, one can see that Lot's outcry comes to the angels whom God sent and motivates them to save him: "The men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door" (v. 10). God, in this way, shows His grace and mercy upon Lot.

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[14] Alexander, "Lot's Hospitality: A Clue to His Righteousness," 291.

Lastly, through this scene, the reader recognizes the fulfillment of God's

verification of "the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah" and how grave their sin is

(18:20–21).[15] The reader would perceive that God must have been able to decide that the

Sodomites be doomed to destruction, based upon Lot's hospitality to, and the Sodomites'

brutality against, the angels.

The Angels' and Lot's Warnings of Salvation and Destruction (19:12–14)

In this scene, the angels urge Lot to leave with his family and relatives, because

they are about to destroy this place and the outcry against it is so great before the LORD

(vv. 12–13). Here, the author clarifies the angels' proclamation of salvation from Sodom

for Lot and the sentence of destruction for Sodom. In turn, Lot responds to the angels

with a proclamation to his sons-in-law of salvation from, and sentence of destruction for,

Sodom. However, Lot's sons-in-law disbelieve and ridicule what he says (v. 14).

The literary structure includes a striking contrast between Lot's and his sons-in-

law's reactions to the message. To clarify this contrast, the author places the repeated

speech made by both the angels (vv. 12–13) and Lot (v. 14):

"Bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this place" (*hôṣēʾ min-hammāqôm: ki-mašḥiṯim ʾanaḥnû ʾeṯ-hammāqôm hazzê* [כִּי־ :הוצא מן־המקום]
[מַשְׁחִתִים אנאחנו את־המקום הזה]) (vv. 12–13, emphasis added);

[15] Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18–50*, 20–21; Jeansonne, "The Characterization of Lot in Genesis," 126; Weston W. Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah: History and Motif in Biblical Narrative*, vol. 231, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 76.

"Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city" (*qûmû ṣᵉʾû min-hammāqôm hazzê ki-mašḥiṯ* yhwh *ʾeṯ-hāʿir* [קומו צאו מן־המקום הזה כי־משחית יהוה את־העיר [את־העיף]) (v. 14, emphasis added).

As a result, this syntactic repetition with the imperative form results in different reactions by Lot and his sons-in-law: Lot obeys, while his sons-in-law disobey. The fact that Lot delivers the angels' message, as they said, faithfully and obediently to his sons-in-law implies that Lot, in a sense, plays a prophetic role as did other Biblical prophets.[16] On the other hand, the fact that Lot's sons-in-law disbelieve and laugh at the message from the angels through Lot, implies that they are identified as disqualified from salvation like the other Sodomites, as will be discussed further.

The Angels' Warning of Escape and Rescue of Lot and his Family (19:15–22)

The author takes two spatial steps to describe the angels' rescue of Lot and his family: Lot and his family's escape from inside to outside the city (vv.15–16) and Lot and his family's escape from inside the valley to Zoar, which was supposed to be to the hills (vv. 17–22). The author designs the double concentric structure with the center portions, which contained Lot's action and speech sandwiched by the angels' action and speech (warning), in each of two sections (19:15–16; 17–22) (Table 6.4).

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[16] See J. Daniel Hays, *Message of the Prophets: A Survey of the Prophetic and Apocalyptic Books of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 23–24; P. W. Ferris, Jr., "Prayer," *DOT:Pr* 586–587; J. C. Moeller, "Salvation, Deliverance," *DOT:Pr* 697.

Table 6.4. Concentric structure in 19:15–22

1A.	19:15	The angels' warning of escape to Lot and his family	(Inside/Outside)
1B.	19:16a	Lot's hesitation	
1A'.	19:16b	The angels' rescue of Lot and his family	
2A.	19:17	The angel's warning of escape to the hills	(Inside/Outside)
2B.	19:18–20	Lot's plea to the angels	
2A'.	19:21–22	The angel's warning of escape to Zoar	(The valley/ Zoar)

The angels' warning to and rescue of Lot and his family (19:15–16)

The author describes the contrast between the angels' urgency (v. 15) and Lot's

hesitation (v.16a) with the employment of Hebrew verbs: urged or hurry (*yāʾiṣû* [יאיצו])

and lingered or tarry (*yiṯmahmah* [יתמהמה]). The author does not directly state the reason

for Lot's dallying but guides the reader to imagine it.[17] To a righteous person, Lot's

reluctance to obey the angels' warning might seem as inappropriate and unfaithful as his

sons-in-law's rejection of his waring. However, Lot's reluctance might instead represent

a struggle between faith and doubt, similar to that experienced by Abraham and Sarah

when God delayed fulfil of the promise to give them an heir (15:1–18:15). Alternatively,

in context, it might have been wrenching decision for Lot to part with relatives, in

particular his sons-in-law who rejected his warning and were doomed to destruction. In a

word, Lot felt compassion for his relatives. The author, to put it differently, might have

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[17] Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 1B:239.

represented Lot's hesitation in this urgent situation, not as a lack of faith but as a

wavering heart, debating whether he should abandon them or not.

In order to emphasize the angels' rescue of Lot and his family as the result of the

LORD's mercy, the author articulates God's mercy upon Lot and his family in two kinds

of term usage. First, the combination of three Hebrew words: 'seize' (*chazaq* [חזק]), 'by

the hand' (*bᵉyāḏ* [ביד]),[18] and 'bring out' (*yāṣāʾ* [יצא]) can be found in Exodus 13:3:

"Then Moses said to the people, 'Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt,

out of the house of slavery, *for by a strong hand* (*bᵉḥōzeq yāḏ* [בחזק יד]) the LORD

brought you out (*hôṣiʾ* [הוציא]) from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten"

(emphasis added).[19] In other words, as the LORD brought the people of Israel by the

hand from suffering and destruction by Egypt, He brings Lot and his family by the strong

hand of the angels from inside to outside of the city.

Second, the author also insists on the LORD's mercy with the repetitive use of the

Hebrew word 'with hand' (*bᵉyaḏ* [ביד]) which is not exactly translated in English: "So the

men grabbed his hand (*bᵉyāḏô* [בידו]), his wife's hand (*ûḇᵉyaḏ-ʾištô* [וביד-אשתו]), and two

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[18] Eventually the phrase "(by) the hand" does not represent the angels' but Lot's and his family's hand.

[19] See also Ex. 13:14, 16; Isa. 41:13; 42:6.

daughters' hands (*ûḇ^eyaḏ š^ete* [ובביד שתי])" (personal trans.).[20] The reader could perceive

that the LORD had showed compassion towards Lot and all his family without missing

anyone, just as He did on the Israelites in Egypt.

The author, moreover, brackets the narrator's comment between the angels' two

kinds of rescues of Lot and his family to clarify the LORD's mercy (the concentric

structure).[21] The narrator's inner focalization, as well as the concentric structure, draws

the reader's attention to what the author is interested in and focuses on (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5. Concentric structure in 19:16

A.	v. 16b	The angels' rescue of Lot and his family
B.	v. 16c	The narrator's explanation of the reason for the rescue of Lot and his family
A'.	v. 16d	The angels' rescue of Lot and his family

The double concentric structure (vv. 15–16b; 16b–d) indicates to the reader what

the author is interested in and focuses on (Lot's hesitation [v. 16a] and the LORD's

mercy [v. 16c]), while the contrast structure (the angels' rescue and Lot's hesitation)

clarifies to the reader the LORD's mercy. In this way, the author drives home to the

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[20] The Japanese Bible translates them exactly. Shin Nihon Seisyo Kanko Kai, trans., *Shin Kai Yaku Seisho 2017 (新改訳聖書 2017)* (Tokyo: Inochi No Kotoba Sha, 2017), Gen. 19:16.

[21] Since one can see *b^e* (ב) with an infinitive as the causal sense 'because' in rare cases, "*b^eḥemlaṯ yhwh ʿālāyw* [בחמלת יהוה עליו]" can be translated into "because the LORD had mercy upon him." Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 601.

reader that the angels' rescue of Lot is not attributed to his righteous behavior, but rather to the LORD's mercy.[22]

The reader, on the other hand, would note that the LORD took the initiative in having mercy upon Lot through the angels, while He manifested it in covenantal relationship with Abraham and his intercession (18:16–33).[23] Therefore, the reader would perceive that Abraham's intercession - that the righteous not to be swept away with the wicked - has the efficacy of inducing God to have mercy upon Lot who hesitates to escape.

The angels' warning of Lot's escape (19:17–22)

The author employs concentric structure again in the second story of the angels' rescue of Lot and his family. The part of Lot's plea to the angels to change the place to escape from the hills to Zoar (vv. 18–20) is sandwiched between two parts of the angel's warning of escape to the hills (v. 17) and to Zoar (vv. 21–22).

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[22] Sailhamer mentions, "the basis of God's rescue of Lot is not Lot's righteousness but the Lord's compassion." However, one can think also that God's rescue of Lot was attributed to Lot's righteousness in the sense that Lot heard and responded to the angels' warning and kept his righteous behaviors. Sailhamer, "Genesis," 198. Jeansonne attributes the rescue to Lot's connection with the righteous Abraham because God remembered Abraham (19:29), although not to Lot's righteousness. Jeansonne, "The Characterization of Lot in Genesis," 128.

[23] Kinlaw argues about Abraham's intercession and God's initiative. Kinlaw, *Lectures in Old Testament Theology: Yahweh Is God Alone*, 150–151.

The angel's warning of Lot's escape to the hills (19:17)

The author places Lot and his family outside the city through the intervention of the angels, but still Lot's life is in danger of destruction because he is in the valley. Thus, one of the angels gives the warning to Lot (v. 17). The author uses the concentric structure in an angel's speech to clarify to the reader what his/her primary interest is (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6. Concentric structure in an angel's speech (19:17)

A.	v. 17a	Escape for Lot's life
B.	v. 17b	Do not look back and stop anywhere in the valley
A'.	v. 17c	Escape for Lot's life to the hills

The focal point in this structure is on how Lot and his family should escape to a safe place which God appointed: "Do not look back" or "stop anywhere in the valley" (v. 17b). This is tied with the tragic event which happens to Lot's wife later (v. 26). In this way, the reader perceives, through an angel's speech, why and where Lot should escape: "for your life (Lot's life)" and "to the hills' (v. 17a, c).

The author, in particular, reiterates the phrase already referred to in the first part of each of the angels' warnings (v. 15a) in order to emphasize the significance of Lot's life (v. 17c): "Lest you be swept away" (*pen-tissāpȇ* [פֶּן־תִּסָּפֶה]). In other words, the author also shows to the reader, the author's primary interest in Lot's life (*nefesh* [נֶפֶשׁ]). In fact, the author's use of the Hebrew verb *safa* (ספה) 'sweep away' in this phrase makes

allusions to God's decisive answer to the critical queries from Abraham: "Will you

indeed sweep away (*tispê* [תספה]) the righteous with wicked?" (18:23) and "Will you then

sweep away (*tispê* [תספה]) the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?"

(18:24). In that sense, the author remarks that Lot is the righteous person who should not

be swept away with the wicked in Sodom.

Lot's plea to the angel as a prophetic role (19:18–20)

Lot's plea to one of the angels can be summarized as two crucial requests: to save

Lot's life and to escape not to the hills but to Zoar (vv. 19, 20). In the former, while

employing the Hebrew word *nepeš* (נפש [life]) already referred to in v. 17 and *ḥyh* (חיה

[save, live, be alive]), the author elucidates the conception with the phrase in v. 19: "Lest

the disaster overtake me and I die." In the latter, the author does not indicate why Lot

cannot escape to the hills, but rather why Lot desires to escape where he wants to: the city

is "near enough to flee to" and "little one" (v. 20).

The reader would identify the discourse between Lot and the angel, which is

composed of Lot's plea to the angel of escape to Zoar for his life and the angel's

generous and honest response to him with his warning (19:17–22), as comparable to the

one between Abraham and the LORD (18:23–33). Lot, therefore, vindicates to the angel

his own claim that he escapes to Zoar for his life (19:18–20), as does Abraham for the life

of the righteous to the LORD (18:23–33). In this respect, it can be seen that the relationship between Lot and the angels is compatible to the one between Abraham and the LORD.

Lot's plea to the angels to escape to Zoar, as discussed later, results in not only the salvation of Lot, but also of the Zoarites, as Lot is saved through Abraham's plea to God as well as the Lord's mercy. In this sense, Lot also plays a prophetic role in his plea to the angels.

The angel's warning of escape (19:21–22)

The angel responds to Lot's plea and offers Lot the warning of escape to Zoar (vv. 21–22). In the warning, God through the angel guarantees Lot's life in two ways: He does not overthrow the city of which Lot has spoken (v. 21); and He delays the destruction until Lot arrives there (v. 22).

Lot's escape to Zoar in God's response to Abraham's plea (19:21). The first of these concessions to Lot implies that the people of Zoar, although originally doomed to destruction with others in the valley, are not be destroyed but saved, due to Lot's escape there. This also makes allusion to God's response to Abraham's plea that God's justice does not destroy the righteous with the wicked (18:23, 24). In this sense, the reader perceives Lot as a righteous person.

Lot's escape to Zoar in his presence as the angels (19:21). In the narrative, the author

clarifies that wherever Lot is with the angels is safe space, such as inside the house, and

outside the city (in the valley), even if all the cities in the valley are doomed to

destruction. The presence of the angels guarantees Lot's security and life even in the

valley. However, when God allows Lot to run away into Zoar and guarantees his life

there, Lot is not accompanied by the angels' presence anymore in Zoar as he was in

Sodom. Rather, Lot's presence, not the angels' presence, serves to guarantee the Zoarites'

security of life in the midst of God's destruction. Speaking from the Zoarites' viewpoint,

God sends Lot to save the people of Zoar even if doomed to God's destruction, just as He

sends the angles as His agent to Sodom for the salvation of Lot and his family. In that

sense, God's *ḥeseḏ* reaches out even to the people of Zoar through Lot, a righteous

person.

God's judgment in His *ḥeseḏ* to His covenantal counterpart, Lot (19:22). On the

other hand, this (19:22) implies that Lot's arrival at Zoar affects God's final decision to

destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Does God's sovereign decision depend on human action?

No. Rather, God's decision of destruction is pertinent to His own character represented as

ḥeseḏ (חסד) which means steadfast love or royal love or kindness. *Ḥeseḏ* plays the crucial

and significant role in keeping the covenantal relationship between God and the people of

Israel, but is not obligatory in Old Testament.[24]

Although not clarifying the covenantal relationship between God and Lot, the

author portrays *ḥeseḏ* at the heart of the relationship between God and Lot in Lot's

speech: "You [God, through the angels] have shown me great kindness [*ḥeseḏ*] in saving

my life" (19:19).[25] *Ḥeseḏ* of God drives Himself to save Lot in "tenacious fidelity in a

relationship, readiness and resolve to continue to be loyal to those to whom one is bound"

as Brueggemann mentions.[26] And in this *ḥeseḏ-centered* relationship, God's final

judgment to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah is executed with His sovereignty at the

moment when Lot arrives at Zoar.

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[24] Kinlaw describes *ḥeseḏ* as the nature of God and in short it is "the way He always acts, that tells us about who He is." "God's *ḥeseḏ* is revealed, particularly, in the context of the covenant. It is by means of the covenant that He reveals His *ḥeseḏ*. But when He reveals it, it is not merely an abstract quality. Rather, *ḥeseḏ* is something you do, and something you do for another person. It is not something in isolation." "And so, *ḥeseḏ* is a description of the way He relates to people, not an abstraction…Because doing *ḥeseḏ* is in the very nature of God, a person who is in relation to Him has somethings he or she can lay claim to." Kinlaw, *Lectures in Old Testament Theology: Yahweh Is God Alone*, 171–188.

[25] The researcher notes *ḥeseḏ* here to argue the significance of the potential covenant relationship between Lot and the angel (God). However, the author also employs another Hebrew word *ḥēn* [חֵן] (favor) to show a mutual relationship between Lot and the angel (God), not a covenantal relationship (19:19). Interestingly, the author of Genesis employs the syntactic phrases with *ḥēn* [חֵן] (favor) for Noah, Abraham, and Lot as God's (the angel's) counterparts as follows: "But Noah **found favor in the sight of the LORD**" (wᵉnōaḥ **māṣāʾ ḥēn bᵉʿēnē yhwh** [בנח מצא הן בעיני יהוה]) (6:8); "My lord, if I (Abraham) **find favor** with you (**in your sight** [personal trans.])" (ʾim-nāʾ **māṣāʾti ḥēn bᵉʿēnekā** [אם־נא מצאתי חן בעיניך]) (18:3); "Your servant (Lot) **has found favor** with you (**in your sight** [personal trans])" (hinnê-nāʾ **māṣāʾ ʿaḇdᵉkā ḥēn bᵉʿēnekā** [הנה־נא מצא עבדך חן בעיניך]) (19:19; emphasis added). Freedman contrasts *ḥēn* [חֵן] in comparison to *ḥeseḏ* [חסד] to make a clear distinction. Lundbom Freedman, "חָנַן," TDOT 5:22–36.

[26] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 217.

Lot's escape to Zoar in the partial fulfillment of God's promise with Abraham

(18:18). Abraham's intercession with the LORD (18:23–32) induces God to show great

ḥeseḏ, which is practiced in the covenantal relationship, to save the righteous Lot (19:1–

16), while Lot's plea to the angels as they are saving his life (19:18–20) also induces God

to show such great *ḥeseḏ* as to save even the people of Zoar in addition to Lot and his

family (19:21–22). As a result, the author draws the attentive reader's focus to God's

introspection regarding the covenantal relationship with Abraham: "Abraham shall surely

become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him"

(18:18). It follows that Abraham, to be sure, brought redemptive blessing to the people of

Zoar in the midst of destruction through Lot, the righteous person in God's *ḥeseḏ*.

Therefore, through this scene, the author exposes the partial fulfillment of God's promise

to Abraham that "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him" (18:18; 12:2–3).

God's Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (19:23–26)

The author, after establishing the temporal setting (v. 23a), employs again the

concentric structure in this scene to draw the reader's attention to the central message:

God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Table 6.7).

Table 6.7. Concentric structure in 19:23–26

A.	19:23b	Lot's arrival at Zoar	(Inside Zoar)
B.	19:24–25	God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	(In the valley)
A'.	19:26	Lot's wife in the valley	(Outside Zoar)

According to the angel's warning (19:21–22), God executes the destruction of

Sodom and Gomorrah at the moment when Lot arrives at Zoar (v. 24). It is also the result

of God's investigation of Sodom through the angels (19:1–11). The gravity of God's

destruction extends even to nature on the ground (v. 25).

The author describes the contrast between Lot's and his wife's destinies: Lot's

salvation (his life) (v. 23b) and his wife's destruction (her death) (v. 26). In other words,

Lot obeys the angel's warning, while his wife disobeys it and looks back before Lot

arrives at Zoar. Hence, Lot's wife is disqualified from God's salvation, as are the

Sodomites (19:11) and his sons-in-law (19:14).

Lot's Relationship with the Disqualified Characters from God's Salvation

As far as the groupings of disqualified characters from God's salvation are

concerned, the fewer the disqualified people become in a category, the greater and deeper

Lot's relationship with each of them grows in quality. In other words, the number of the

disqualified people dwindle from the large number of the Sodomites to the small group of

Lot's sons-in-law, and lastly to his wife, while Lot's relationship of each of them is closer

and more significant from citizenship, to kinship, and lastly to marriage.[27] Thus, these

dynamic and dramatic representations convey to the reader the message that the critical

problem of human disobedience to God (or the depravity) may be near at hand (Figure

6.6).
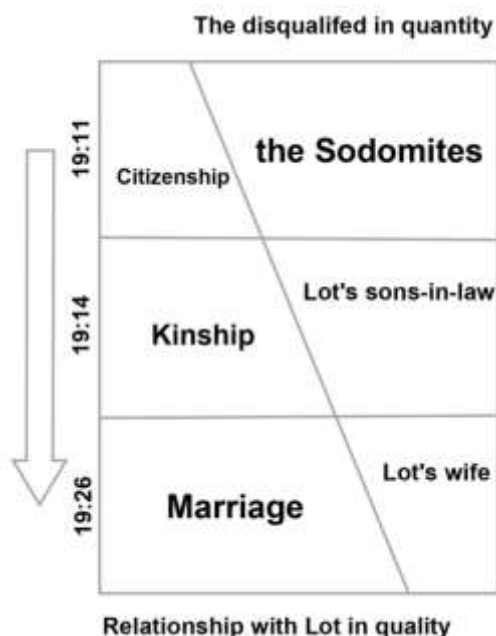
Figure 6.6. Lot's relationship with the disqualified in quantity and quality

Abraham's Verification of Sodom and Gomorrah (19:27–28)

The author describes where Abraham went early in the morning as "the place

where he had stood before the LORD" (v. 27) and in fact interceded with the LORD for

salvation of the righteous in Sodom (18:22–33). The men (the angels) had looked down

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[27] Bauer and Traina defines "the movement from general to particular" as "particularization" and specifically "the movement from the presentation of a group of persons to the specific description of a subgroup or even an individual person within the originally presented larger group" as "biographical particularization." David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 100–103.

toward Sodom before their investigation of the Sodomites' depravity (19:4–5, 9) and the

LORD questioned Himself on His covenantal relationship with Abraham (18:16–21).

Now Abraham looks down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the

valley, and verifies the terrible catastrophe (v. 28).

Conclusion

Abraham-Lot's Narrative in Parallel Symmetry (18:1–33; 19:1–28)

The attentive reader would note that the author has designed the Abraham-Lot

narrative (18:1–33; 19:1–26) in juxtaposition, or, in literary terms, in parallel symmetry.

The author develops the Abraham-Lot narrative in this parallel symmetrical structure

(Table 6.8).

Table 6.8. Parallel symmetry in 18:1–33 and 19:1–28

		18:1–33		19:1–26
A.	18:1–8	Abraham's hospitality to the men	19:1–11	Lot's hospitality to the men
B.	18:9–15	The men's care about Abraham's family	19:12–16	The men's care about Lot's family
C.	18:16–19	God's Introspection of the covenantal relationship with Abraham	–	–
D.	18:20–21	God's announcement about destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	19:17	The angel's warning of escape to the hills for Lot's life
E.	18:22–32	Abraham's plea to God for the righteous and God's promise of the life of the righteous	19:18–23	Lot's plea to the angels for his life and the angel's promise of escape to Zoar for Lot's life
F.	18:33	God went on his way and Abraham returned home	19:24–28	God destroyed the cities of the valley and Abraham came back where he stood before the Lord

Lot, like Abraham, shows warm and honest hospitality to the men (18:1–8; 19:1–

11). The men care about Lot's family--his wife, his daughters, and his sons-in-law--and

begin with a question, "Have you anyone (*mi* [מִי] 'who') else here?" (19:12),[28] and save

Lot's family except for his sons-in-law (19:16). This corresponds to how the men ask

Abraham's wife and only son, "Where (*ʾayyê* [אַיֵּה]) is Sarah your wife?" (18:9)[29] and

deliver the good news that they will have a son Isaac the next year (18:10, 14).

However, in Lot's narrative (19:1–28), there is no section parallel to God's

interior monologue (18:16–19). This "deviation within an otherwise clear symmetry" is

called "asymmetry" which is "one of the most forceful stylistic devices in Biblical

Hebrew narrative."[30] "Interpretation of asymmetry begins," as Walsh puts it, "from the

principle that the anomaly draws attention to itself. It is therefore a focal point in

understanding a passage."[31] This means that God's introspection on the covenantal

relationship with Abraham is the cornerstone in the Abraham-Lot narrative, as the

researcher has already observed before and will again in 19:29.

The angels offer Lot the warning to escape to the hills for his life without

reference to his family (19:17), as the LORD reveals to Abraham what He is about to do:

the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:20–21). In particular, the author clarifies the

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[28] Cf. Gen. 3:11

[29] Cf. Gen. 3:9; 4:9

[30] Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, 101.

[31] Walsh also recognizes as a second important interpretive principle the significance of not only linear readings but also intratextual ones, which compares the two sequences and can afford additional possibilities. This has already been argued in the study of 18:16–19. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, 102.

destination of and the reason for escape: to the hills and for Lot's life (19:17). This had

already been implied through the angels' speech: "**Get out of this place**, for the LORD is

about to destroy the city" (19:14; emphasis added) and "Take your wife and your two

daughters who are here, lest **you be swept away** in the punishment of the city" (19:15;

emphasis added).

Lot pleads with the angels to change the destination for saving his life (19:18–20),

and the angels accept his plea and promise not to destroy his life; if he goes to Zoar

(19:21–22) and he will be saved (19:23). Likewise, Abraham pleads with the LORD to

save the life of the righteous for His justice and the LORD accepts his plea and promises

not to destroy the righteous with the wicked (18:22–32). The author closes the story with

God's action that He destroys the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (19:24–26) and

Abraham's action that he comes back where he stood before the Lord (19:27–28),

although ending with similar manners that God goes the way to bring destruction to

Sodom and Gomorrah and Abraham returns home (18:33).

Dramatic Irony in 18:1–33 and 19:1–28

The author also uses dramatic irony as a literary device in parallel symmetrical

structure between 18:1–33 and 19:1–28. The reader, that is to say, encounters complete

perception and knowledge unavailable to the character Lot, but which the author also has

known through 18:1–33 and 19:27–28 (Table 6.9).

Table 6.9. The gap between the character's and the reader's perception/knowledge

	Perception and knowledge	
	The character's (Lot's)	The reader's
The covenantal relationship between Abraham and God (18:1–33)	–	☒
The angels' rescue of Lot and his family (19:1–26)	☒	☒
Abraham's verification (19:27–28)	–	☒

Therefore, the reader, through irony, pays attention to the covenantal relationship

between Abraham and God (18:1–33) throughout the story of the angels' rescue of Lot

and his family (19:1–26). Specifically, the reader perceives that Lot's autonomous and

positive actions (his hospitality to the angels [19:6–8], his delivering the angels' message

to his sons-in-law [19:14], his plea to the angels [19:19–20], and his bringing salvation to

the Zoarites and himself [19:23]) represent his righteousness.

The author, through irony, draws the reader's attention to the following: (1) the

efficacy of Abraham's plea to the LORD (18:22–32) so that God shows great *ḥeseḏ* (חסד)

in saving Lot, the righteous person (19:1–16); (2) the efficacy in Lot of Abraham's

command "to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice" (18:19), so

that the LORD might bring to Abraham what He has promised him,[32] specifically an heir,

Isaac (18:19; 21:1–3); and (3) a partial of fulfillment of God's promise with Abraham

(18:18) as a result of bringing redemptive blessing to the Zoarites (19:23). The author,

through dramatic irony as literary technique, highlights Abraham as a covenantal

counterpart and a prophet of God and transforms Lot into a supporting character.[33] It

follows that Lot plays a significant role as a supporting character in the larger context of

Genesis 18–19, although he is a principal character in Genesis 19.

Narrator's Summary and Comment (19:29)

The author concludes the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:16–19:28) with the

narrator's summary and comment which also has chiastic structure (Table 6.10).

Table 6.10. Chiastic structure in 19:29

A.	19:29a	God's destruction of the cities of the valley
B.	19:29b	God's remembering Abraham
B'.	19:29c	God's sending Lot out of the midst of destruction
A'.	19:29d	God's destruction of the cities in which Lot had lived

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[32] In the Hebrew text, the second *lémaʾan* (למען) in 18:19, which is especially used to indicate a purpose like the first one, is used for a consecutive force. Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 598; W. Hall Harris, ed., *The NET Bible Notes*, 1st, Accordance electronic ed. (Richardson: Biblical Studies Press, 2005), paragraph 1810. https://accordance.bible/link/read/NET_Notes#1810.

[33] Rossow argues that "Biblical dramatic irony almost always highlights God's grace and goodness." Francis C Rossow, "Dramatic Irony in the Bible–With a Difference," *Concordia Journal* 8, no. 2 (March 1982): 49–51, accessed September 18, 2019, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000790700&site=ehost-live.

The author summarizes how God took initiatives towards Abraham and Lot (v.

29b, c) in the narrative scene when God destroys the cities of the valley including Sodom

and Gomorrah (v. 29a, d). The first part of the statement (v.29b, c) that "God

remembered Abraham," implies that God not only remembered the intimate covenantal

relationship with Abraham (18:16–21), but also Abraham's intercession that the righteous

should not be destroyed with the wicked in Sodom (18:22–33). The latter part, that

"(God) sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow" (v. 29c), shows that God, in the midst

of destruction, saved Lot because of Lot's righteousness and also because of Abraham's

intercession and vindication to the LORD, because of Lot's plea to the angels, and

because of His great kindness *ḥeseḏ*.[34]

Lot's Final Appearance (19:30–38)

The author describes the final scene of the Abraham-Lot narrative after God's

destruction of the cities of the valley with double concentric structures in 19:30 and

19:31–38 (Table 6.11).

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[34] Walsh refers to epitome as one of the commonest types of partial symmetry, which involve some of its subunits. "Epitome is a device through which the organization of a short subunit at the beginning or end of a literary unit reflects the organization of the whole." It functions as a concluding summary at the end of the unit (schematized ABab). This kind of partial chiastic pattern is true of the literary structure in Gen 18–19: (A) God and Abraham (18:1–33), (B) God and Lot (19:1–28), (a) God remembered Abraham (19:29a,b), and (b) God saved Lot (19:29c,d). Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, 59–60.

Table 6.11. Double concentric structure in 19:30–38

A.	19:30a	**Lot** went up out of Zoar and **lived** in the hills **with his two daughters**
B.	19:30b	Because Lot was afraid to live in Zoar
A'.	19:30c	**Lot lived** in a cave **with his two daughters**
C.	19:31–35	**Lot's two daughter's** conspiracy to preserve **offspring**
D.	19:36	Lot's two daughter's pregnancy by their father
C'.	19:37–38	**Lot's two daughter's birth**: Moab and Ben-ammi

Lot's Residence in the Hills (19:30)

The author brackets Lot's fear of living in Zoar between his living (yēšeḇ [ישב]

vv. 30a, 30c) in the hills and in a cave with his two daughters (šᵉtē ḇᵉnōṯāyw [שְׁתֵּי בְנֹתָיו]

vv. 30a, 30c). Lot evacuated to Zoar for a time but later moves into the hills, because he

was afraid to live in Zoar. The reader would assume from the context that the Zoarites

like the Sodomites were so wicked that Lot is afraid to live there. They did not try to

change their lives or repent of their sins even after God's terrible destruction was clearly

visible before them. Hence, in this central part, the author implies the Zoarites' depravity

like the Sodomites' (19:4–5, 9).

Lot had already known where he should go when he was afraid, because the angel

had advised him to go to the hills for safety (19:17). The reader can imagine that God, in

His *ḥeseḏ*, protected Lot's life in Zoar, but the Zoarites jeopardized Lot so that he felt

afraid to live there. Lot saw the only way to obey the warning, which God had already

offered in His *ḥeseḏ*, was to go to the hills as the place for safety and to live in a cave

with his two daughters. Lot moved from the place in danger, Zoar, which was destined to

be destroyed with other cities in the valley, to the safety of the hills where God, through

the angel, directed the righteous Lot to flee.

<div align="center">The Birth of Moab and Ben-ammi by Lot's Daughters (19:31–38)</div>

In the central part of the concentric structure (v. 36), the author makes plain the

fact that both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father, Lot the righteous. Lot's

daughters make the ultimate decision to have incestuous relationships with their father to

preserve offspring (*zrʿ* [זרע]) from him (vv. 32, 34) particularly in light of these two

critical factors: (1) Lot is old (*zqn* [זקן]) and (2) there are no men left on earth as far as

Lot's daughters know (v. 30). As Wenham comments, Lot's firstborn daughter, who

conspires without her father's apparent awareness, is so hopeless and desperate to get

married and to find another woman for her father, that "she exaggerates the effects of the

recent catastrophe."[35] Eventually, they give birth to Moab, the father of the Moabites and

to Ben-ammi, the father of the Ammonites. Gentry mentions the association of the birth

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[35] Wenham, eventually, interprets this incident "to pity Lot in his last and most painful loss of honor at the hands of those who should have loved him most." in parallel with Noah and his sons in the story of the flood (Gen. 9:20–27). Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 2:61–62. Alter also argues, in connection with the global cataclysm of the Flood story, the elder sister "looks out upon the desolate landscape after the destruction of the cities of the plain and imagines that she, her sister, and their father are the sole survivors of humankind." Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*, 88. Enns analyzes that the exaggeration that "there is not a man on earth" (19:31) for Lot's daughters, which brings them into getting their father Lot drunk and having sex with him, serves to link this episode to the Noah story, where everyone does die except Noah and his family. Enns, "Uh, That Sounds Familiar (Again)."

of two nations with Abraham's blessing, "As the sorry story of Lot at the end of Genesis 19 shows, Abraham succeeded in saving two entire (future) nations: Moab and the Ammon. Abraham is beginning to be a blessing to the (other) nations."[36]

In fact, Moab is to be included in the Davidic line through the Moabite woman, Ruth (Ruth 4:17–22). The author of the book of Ruth, emphasizing the birth of her son by the LORD, says, "So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went into her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son" (Ruth 4:13). On the other hand, Naamah the Ammonite is identified as the mother of Rehoboam, the first of the southern kings who succeeded to the Davidic throne (1 Kings 14:21).[37]

Therefore, the scene of Lot's offspring reminds the reader of Abraham's: Isaac by Sarah his wife and Ishmael by Hagar his Egyptian slave. Isaac, specifically, fathers Israel who becomes also the root of the Davidic line. Both of the stories about Abraham's and Lot's offspring have in common some terms related to the crucial issues around which the author develops the narrative: 'offspring' (*zāraʿ* [זרע]),[38] 'bear' (*yalad* [ילד]),[39] and 'old' (*zaqen* [זקן]).[40]

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[36] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenant*, 283; See also Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 176–177.

[37] Enns calls as "those exceptions (their inclusion into the Davidic line) WAY interesting," while he argues that Lot's offspring are cursed implicitly (Deuteronomy 23:3–6) and later they are annoying and troublesome to the Israelites. Enns, "Uh, That Sounds Familiar (Again)."

[38] Gen. 12:7; 13:15, 16; 15:3, 5, 13, 18; 16:10; 17:7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 19; **19:32, 34**. (Bold for Lot)

[39] Gen. 11:30; 16:1, 2, 11, 15, 16; 17:12, 13, 17, 19, 21; 18:13; **19:37, 38**; 21:2, 3, 5. (Bold for Lot)

[40] Gen. 18:11, 12, 13; **19:31**; 21:2, 7. (Bold for Lot)

Literary Structure in Genesis 18:1–19:38

As the result of this study, the researcher can also identify a stylistic and aesthetic structure known as a reverse symmetrical (chiastic) structure in Genesis 18:1–19:38 (Table 6.12).

Table 6.12. Chiastic structure in 18:1–19:38

A.	18:1–15	God's final announcement to Abraham about the birth of Isaac
B.	18:16–21	God's revelation to Abraham of the planned destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
C.	18:22–33	Abraham's intercession for the righteous to God and God's response
D.	19:1–11	Lot and the Sodomites' hospitality/aggression to the angels
E.	19:12–14	The angels' warning to Lot and Lot's warning to his sons-in-law
E'.	19:15–22	The angels' warning to and rescue of Lot, and Lot's plea to the angel
D'.	19:23–26	God's destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah
C'.	19:27	Abraham's verification of God's response to his intercession
B'.	19:28	Abraham's verification of God's judgment to Sodom and Gomorrah
+	19:29	The narrator's summary and comment
A'.	19:30–38	Lot's daughters' birth from their father: Moab and Ben-ammi

The author brackets the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:16–19:29) with the stories about Abraham's and Lot's offspring: the birth of Isaac and the birth of Moab and Ben-ammi (18:1–15; 19:30–38).[41] After His final announcement to Abraham and Sarah about the birth of Isaac, God embarks on judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah by sending the angels to Sodom and then reveals it to Abraham following about His introspection on the covenantal relationship with Abraham (18:16–21), while Abraham verifies God's

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[41] Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 2:41; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 1B:208–209.

judgment to Sodom and Gomorrah (19:28). In the former, the men look down toward

Sodom (*wayyašqipû ʿal-pᵉne sᵉḏōm* [וישקפו על־פני סדם]) in 18:16, while, in the latter,

Abraham, instead of the men, looks down toward Sodom and Gomorrah (*wayyašqep ʿal-*

pᵉne sᵉḏōm wa ʿᵃmōrâ [וישקף על־פני סדם ועמרה]) in 19:28 (emphasis added).

Abraham stands before the LORD (*wᵉʾaḇrahām ʿôḏennû ʿōmeḏ lipne yhwh*

[ואברהם עודנו עמד לפני יהוה]) to intercede for the salvation of the righteous, and God

responds to Abraham's reasoning (18:22–33). Then, after God's destruction of Sodom

and Gomorrah, Abraham goes to the place where he stood before the LORD (*ʾel-*

hammāqôm ʾᵃšer-ʿāmaḏ šām ʾeṯ-pᵉne yhwh [אל־המקום אשר־עמד שם את־פני יהוה]) to confirm

God's response to his intercession in 19:27 (emphasis added). The author contrasts Lot's

and the Sodomites' reception of the angels (19:1–11) and notes God's investigation of

Sodom and Gomorrah (18:20–21). As a result of His investigation, God executes

judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah (19:23–26). The author concludes with the

narrator's summary of and comment on the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (19:29).[42]

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[42] The researcher has already argued 19:29 as epitome, which is a type of partial symmetry. See notes in 19:29.

The central parts in this chiastic structure focus on Lot's reaction to the angels' visitation and warning, and the angels' merciful action (19:12–14; 15–22).[43] Lot is willing to deliver the angels' warning (good news) to his sons-in-law (19:12–14), while the angels rescue Lot and his family out of the city by God's kindness (*ḥeseḏ*) in spite of his hesitation at their warning (19:15–16). They accept Lot's plea to escape to Zoar, which was doomed to destruction with other cities in the valley, in order to save his life (19:17–22).

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[43] Wenham also attempts to describe chiastic structure for the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah in 18:16–19:29, but insists on the structure centered on destruction of Sodom announced (19:12–13). Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 2:41–42.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The researcher investigated the role of Lot as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19) and answered sub-questions to achieve the objectives in the exploratory process as follows: (1) Lot's role as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham through his first to the fourth appearance in Genesis 11–14; (2) Lot's role as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham despise his absence in Genesis 18; and (3) Lot's role as a supporting character as well as a main character in his relationship with Abraham in his final appearances in Genesis 19.

In the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah, the author describes Lot as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham, by using literary techniques that are stylistic and aesthetic. The attentive reader notes and perceives where the author draws his/her attention and what messages the author communicates to him/her in the narrative through these literary techniques.

The author portrays Lot as a supporting character alongside Abraham at the very beginning of Abrahamic narrative, which is categorized literarily as the exposition, where the reader can expect his appearance in the development of the narrative (11:27–32). Lot appears as a willing and faithful companion to Abraham, who obeyed what the LORD had told him. The Abraham-Lot relationship was built up intimately and trustworthily in the journey (12:1–9).

The author also portrays Lot as a supporting character of Abraham in Genesis 13. However, Lot appears as a more autonomous and active character in his selection of the Jordan Valley as a place to live. The author describes the scene of Lot's selection of the land with literary devices designed aesthetically and stylistically: focalization (viewpoint), time order, theological motif (symbolism), and dramatic irony (13:10). In this way, the attentive readers will feel suspense and tension as they read and perceive Lot's selection of the valley, particularly regarding what will happen to Lot in the development of the narrative, which culminates in God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (13:10) and the Sodomites' wickedness and sins (13:13) in Genesis 19.

Lot continues as a supporting character, a victim taken captive by adversaries and Abraham's rescue of him from them (Genesis 14). This implies the Abraham-Lot relationship was kept close and intimate, although they parted in the previous chapter.

The researcher also noted that the author designs the literary framework between Gen

13–14 and 18–19 with the key themes: Abraham's rescue of Lot, the Sodomites'

wickedness, and God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The author designs the story of Abraham's and Lot's behavior to the men (the

angels) in parallel symmetrical structure (18:1–8; 19:1–11); the story of God's final

announcement to Abraham about Sarah's birth of a son (18:1–15) is the conclusion of His

announcement of Abraham's heir (Genesis 15–18), which is parallel to the angels'

announcement to Lot and his family about salvation from God's destruction of Sodom

and Gomorrah (19:12–19).

The author emphasizes the significance of God's covenantal relationship with

Abraham through His interior monologue representing inner focalization (18:17–19) and

designs the literary framework for the reader to identify the structure of the narrative

(18:16, 22, 33; 19:27). The author also portrays Abraham as a prophet through his

intercession with God for the salvation of the righteous, including Lot in Sodom, and

provides the reader with suspense about what will happen to Lot in the midst of God's

destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:23–32). The attentive reader would perceive,

through God's and Abraham's inner focalizations, that the narrator's summarized

statement—God's remembrance of Abraham (19:29)—points out the significance of

Abraham as a covenantal counterpart (18:17–19) and as a prophet (18:23–32). In this way, the author establishes the literary framework between Genesis 18 and 19.

The author clarifies the stylistic and aesthetic literary structure through the use of temporal and spatial relations (time and space or duration) and draws the reader's attention to where the author is interested in by using a reverse symmetrical structure (concentric and chiastic) (19:1–38).

The attentive reader would note and perceive through reverse symmetrical structures, the following: (1) Lot's righteousness and the Sodomites' depravity in the contrast of Lot's and the Sodomites' behavior toward the angels (19:1–11); (2) Lot's prophetic role to deliver the message from the angels to his sons-in-law (19:12–14); (3) Lot's plea to the angel to flee to Zoar in order to save his life (19:15–22); and (4) Lot's redemptive action as the result of his escape to Zoar (19:23). Therefore, the reader would conclude that Lot's positive and active actions, although easily overlooked, prove his righteousness. On the other hand, Lot's autonomous and righteous actions serve as partial fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (18:17–19). In this sense, Lot is a supporting as well as a principal character in Genesis 19.

Conclusions

Lot's positive actions (Lot's hospitality to the angels [19:1–8], his delivering of the angels' message to his sons-in-law [19:14], his plea to the angels [19:18–20], and his bringing salvation into the Zoarites [19:23]) bear testimony to his righteousness. This implies that Abraham's intercession with God for salvation of the righteous in Sodom (18:22–32) has assumed Lot as a righteous person, especially in view of the fact that he was, as a result, saved.

In this point, first, Lot's righteous actions bear testimony to the efficacy of Abraham's intercession (plea) with the LORD (18:23–32) so that God shows such great *ḥeseḏ* as to save the righteous Lot (19:1–16). Second, Lot's righteous actions bear testimony to the fact that Abraham had already commanded Lot "to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice" (18:19). For this reason, the LORD is to "bring to Abraham what he has promised him," specifically his heir Isaac (18:19; 21:1–3). Third, Lot's actions bear testimony to a partial fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (18:19 [cf. 12:3], "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him") in the sense that Lot's life and presence, which was saved through Abraham's intercession and God's *ḥeseḏ* (mercy), brought redemptive blessing to the Zoarites (19:23).

In conclusion, in spite of being a principal character in Genesis 19, Lot plays a significant role as a supporting character in the Abraham-Lot relationship in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19). By designing the narrative stylistically and aesthetically, the author successfully draws the reader's attention to Abraham as a principal character and a covenantal partner and prophet of God, through Lot's righteous and autonomous actions.

Recommendations

This investigation is limited to using narrative criticism to analyze Lot's role as a supporting character in his relationship with Abraham. As far as the researcher observes, the use of narrative criticism in study of the Old Testament seems to be developing. This criticism seems to be still uncommon and atypical for the Biblical reader, even though narratives occupy most parts of the Scriptures. Commentaries using narrative criticism are not numerous, although some monographs attempt a partial exegesis from this perspective.

Therefore, the researcher is hopeful that this study can serve as a springboard for future related studies using narrative criticism, including studies of: (1) Sarah's role as a supporting character in her relationship with Abraham in Abrahamic narrative; (2) the role of individual supporting characters in their relationship to patriarchal main characters

like Jacob, Isaac, and Joseph in the narrative; (3) the role of individual supporting

characters in their relationship with Pentateuchal main characters, specifically Moses in

the narrative; and (4) the role of individual supporting characters in their relationship with

main characters in other Old Testament narratives.

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