

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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The Last Night of Sodom

Today I want to direct your attention to some passages found in the 19th chapter of the book of Genesis. We will read verses 12-13 "The man said to Lot, Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, take them out of this place! for we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it." From these verses we learn that the doom of the city of Sodom was determined. The only thing left for Lot to do was "get out," and do so in a hurry. We have titled our lesson "The Last Night of Sodom. Sodom was the fun center for a fertile plain that maintained an economy high enough to furnish frolic for all. On this evening of record there are no signs of wrath in the sky. The palaces of sin open to full houses. Cash customers stand in line. Nothing along the boulevards suggests a last night. No siren wails a note of warning. No evening edition screams headlines of disaster. The deluded youth of the city cram the casinos of pleasure and wait for the performance of the far-out to whet their appetites of lust. There was no room for God or the soul in Sodom. This city majored in eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, and a round of endless partying. Had anyone suggested that it was the final night, that person would have been howled down with shrieks of unbelief and mockery. The crowd was passionate and haughty.

The Sinfulness of Sodom.

The angels of God went down to Sodom to see if the city was wholly given to wickedness, so much so that it should be destroyed. And the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me, and if not, I will know" Gen.18:20-21. The meaning: the sins of the people of Sodom, which they are trying desperately to hide, are quite apparent to him. (the outcry is equal to the sin of Sodom.) The idea that God must go down to see is an anthropomorphism (i.e. speaking of God in language that is ordinarily used of men) not to be taken literally. In other words God did not have to go down in bodily form to know what was going on. Abraham had interceded for the city to spare it, if so few as ten righteous people be found. The God sent messengers arrived. Nothing particularly set them apart. No welcome committee offered them the key to the city. Lot offered the hospitality. He did not know who they were, nor did he suspect the awful errand upon which they came. That night the men of the city came to Lot's door. They demanded the visitors show good faith by submitting without question to the passion that has given that city a name of infamy throughout all generations. The Bible records it this way: "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house around, both old and young, all the people of every quarter" Gen.19:4 Notice: (a) People from every quarter of the city were present. Most cities have bad part of town. The part

where most murders, rapes, drug dealing etc. take place. Sodom had become so corrupt that immorality was not limited to one part of town.

(b) It included both young and old. Generally older generation clings to traditional standards. Not in Sodom, immorality had spread throughout all generations. The sin of Sodom, is common today. "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is abomination." Lev.18:22 In Lev. 20:13 we read "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, they, both of them, have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them." I know this message is not popular today, never the less this is what the bible teaches. The sin that the men of Sodom wanted to commit was not just consensual homosexuality, but rather gang homosexual rape. These men still persisted in trying to commit their sin even after the angels struck them blind. "they wearied themselves trying to find the door..." Gen.19:11 It was a horrible and despicable sin. The N.T. looks back on Sodom and condemns the practices of that city. 2Peter 2:6-7 "and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly..."

Jude 7 "as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." TV networks try to shape American thought to believe that homosexuality is an alternate life style that should be accepted by all. But those who are governed by the Bible, will condemn it. The sin is not acceptable even when committed by men who claim to be representatives of God.

God Will Punish The Wicked. A statement that unfortunately is rejected by far too many people today. Modern man has lost belief in the justice of God. All men will be judged.

Act 17:30-31 "The times of this ignorance..." 2Cor. 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" As a result there is not much fear of God anymore. Ezekiel described the wicked of his day: "Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, The Lord sees us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth." Ezek.8:12

Many today have lost the concept that God will punish the wicked. One can attend the funerals of today and reach the conclusion that no one is going to hell. Some religions have fostered this idea by eliminating hell from their theology. "No hell fire and brimstone" sermons here. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah stand as a memorial to the fact that God intends to destroy the wicked. Jude 7 "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner, with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." The Lord describes the punishment of the wicked:

"Hell fire" Matt. 5:22 "a place where both soul and body are destroyed" Mt.10:28

"a place of torment so bad that one would be better off to lose one eye and miss hell than having both eyes to be cast into it" Mt. 18:9 "a place where the fire is eternal, where the fire is not quenched and the worm does not die" Mark 9:43, 47-48 "a place of torment"

Luke 16:3 Paul described it as: "a place of total separation from God" 2Thess. 1:7-9

"a place of wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish" Rom. 2:8-9 We would all do

well to take seriously what the Bible says in regard to eternal punishment. These are not the idle words of men, but the eternal word of the Lord.

God Can Deliver The Righteous From Destruction. The messengers came for one purpose: to see if there were any, in all the city, who could be persuaded to escape from the impending doom. The community was beyond revival. Nothing could save it. God had sent the last two messengers and they had been treated with lurid shock. There is a point beyond which Divine forbearance cannot go. Sodom reached that point that night. There was one last thing for Lot to do---try to save his own family. I want you to visualize him as he moves through the streets of the city before dawn to urge his loved ones to believe and leave the city. It is a lonely scene: an old man, out in the darkest hours, knocking on the doors of his children's homes, making one final effort to save them. They thought he was joking. When Lot comes back, the first streaks of day are visible and the angels can wait no longer. It's time to leave. It was not easy to leave a part of his family behind. He took nothing. It wasn't easy to leave a fortune---the angels tug "Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay in the plain." GET OUT The Lord delivered righteous Lot from the destruction of the city. Peter reassured the righteous in 2Peter 2:6-8 "and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)" The deliverance of the righteous is the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ Jesus came to die for our sins, and deliver us from the destruction to come. Those left behind never made it. Fire and Brimstone canceled every appointment--except two--death and judgment. God walked in and took over. God wrote something over that community: His patience with sin has a boundary beyond which it will not go. You had better read that sign, my friend, and take warning. God lingers now, but the day will come when he will wait no longer on you.

Lot's Wife Looked Back. Lot, his wife, and two daughters leave the city. Jesus told his disciples to "remember Lot's wife..." Luke 17:32 They were not to look back. Lot's wife did, and turned to a pillar of salt. God was not punishing her curiosity. She was guilty of more than this. Lot's wife was looking back with longing eyes. In the city were her home, her possessions, her lifestyle, some of her children, and her friends, a sinful glance of one wanting what she was leaving. Often, those who leave the world, look back with longing eyes. They soon fall back into the very sins, they were departing. We need to remember Lot's wife, lest we be guilty of the same mistake.

One Must Get Sodom Out of Himself. Just getting out of Sodom is not enough. One must be sure that no remnant of Sodom is left to linger in his/her mind. The story of this wicked city and its destruction would not be complete without noticing the wicked influence it had on Lot's two daughters. After their escape they began thinking that there is no mate to be found for them. Consequently each, induces her father to get drunk and commits incest with him on successive nights. We can see that even though Lot and his daughter had gotten out of Sodom, they had not gotten Sodom out of the daughters. The influence of the world affects those who are God's children. 1Cor.15:33 "Be not

deceived bad company is the ruin of a good character. How many people have been dragged down by their associates? The influences that were on one's life before becoming a Christian are not magically removed at baptism. The bad language is still in his memory, the temptation to take God's name in vain, or the desire to commit immorality etc. The individual must eradicate the desire to do evil, but how? The process is called SANCTIFICATION. Jno. 17:17 "Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth." Eph.5:25-27 "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." 1Cor.6:11 "And such were some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." As one puts the word of God in his heart, it drives out the desire to commit sin. It drives Sodom out of his life. W.E.Vine in defining the word "sanctification" says "it is not vicarious, i.e. it cannot be transferred or imputed, it is an individual possession built up little by little as the result of obedience to the Word of God, and of following the example of Christ." We drive Sodom out by renewing our mind. Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the ..." The renewing of the mind refers to the gradual conforming of the man more and more to that new spiritual world into which he has been introduced, and in which he now lives and moves. Thayer says "a renewal, renovation, complete change for the better." By this procedure the child of God is able to eliminate Sodom from his life and live triumphantly for the Lord