

Sodom and Gomorrah

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- Lately, I've been fascinated with how much of the NT can be seen in the OT
 - Matthew 12:40 – *“For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”*
 - Referencing Jonah 1:17 & Luke 24:46 (amongst others)
 - Genesis 2:2 – *“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.”*
 - Similarly, Christians have a rest awaiting them if they are faithful
 - While on earth, the Christian is to be busy
 - Matthew 9:37-38 – *“The he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers in his harvest field.’”*
 - However, if Christians are found faithful after departing from this earth, they have a Sabbath-rest awaiting them
 - Hebrews 4:9-11 – *“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.”*
 - Numbers 21:8-9 – *“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.’ So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.”*
 - Vs 4-5 – the Israelites grew impatient and spoke against God and Moses
 - Vs 6 – God sent venomous snakes among them and many Israelites died
 - Vs 7 – the Israelites repent
 - Vs 8-9 – God instructs Moses to prepare a snake on a pole for people to look at and not die
 - John 3:14-15 – *“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”*
 - Just as the snake was lifted to save the Israelites from the venomous snake bites, so was Jesus lifted to save us from our snake bites (sin)
 - Jesus died on the cross that though we sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), we may look to him – believe and obey – and receive the gift of eternal life as a result
 - Numbers 20:11 – *“Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.”*
 - Vs 6-8 – God told Moses to speak to the rock and it would provide water for the Israelites

- Vs 11 – Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it
 - Vs 12 – Moses and Aaron were punished as a result
 - 1 Corinthians 10:3-4 – *“They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.”*
 - God told Israel that he was sending a Messiah through the prophets
 - But the Jews rejected the Messiah instead of embracing him
 - They struck the Messiah
 - And through this, we drink spiritually the sustenance that God provides us with continually – the many blessings, the forgiveness of sins, the gift of repentance, etc.
- Just as Moses led the Israelites out of their bondage to Egypt (beginning in Exodus 12), so does Jesus lead us out of our bondage to sin
 - John 8:34-36 – *“Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’”*
- Just as Abraham was told to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice in Genesis 22, so did God offer his son Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins (John 3:16)
 - Abraham was stopped just prior to him sacrificing Isaac (Genesis 22:12)
 - However, in God’s sight, Abraham had already offered Isaac as a sacrifice (Hebrews 11:17)
 - Abraham had already considered him sacrificed as well (Hebrews 11:19)
 - So figuratively speaking, not only did Abraham offer Isaac – Abraham received Isaac back from the dead (Hebrews 11:19)
 - God actually did sacrifice his son Jesus, and he was raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)
 - And it is as the result of that gospel that we are saved (Romans 1:16)
- Finally, as a more physical to physical example – God destroyed Jerusalem both in the OT and the NT
 - In 2 Kings 25, 2 Chronicles 36, and Jeremiah 51 – we can read of how God used the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem in 586BC
 - In Matthew 24 and the parallel passages – we can read the prophecy of how God would use the Romans to destroy Jerusalem in 70AD
 - A reminder to all that rebellion against God will not be tolerated – in this case physically, but moreso spiritually
- I could go on and on with these examples, but I think you get the point
- All this and you may think “wow – the NT is truly just a shadow of the OT”
 - But contrary to how my mind wants to think of it, it’s actually the other way around
 - Hebrews 10:1 – *“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.”*

- The law in the OT had its purpose – to bring about the Messiah (our Lord Jesus Christ)
- But we do not follow it today – Romans 7:1-6
 - In fact, the entire book of Romans teaches us that the old law as described in our OT could not bring justification. Only the new law of Christ can bring justification – Romans 8:1-4
 - A truth that is repeated in several other locations in the NT – specifically in the books of Galatians and Hebrews, amongst others
- So, the OT is actually a shadow of the NT
- It takes infinite wisdom to show us the shadow of the NT in so many OT examples – but that is what God did
- Psalm 14:1 – *“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”*
- To deny that the Bible is not inspired by God Almighty, is to not understand what you’re reading
- I say all this to say that I want to focus on 1 more example of how the OT is a shadow of the NT – 1 that you may or may not have ever considered: the story of Sodom and Gomorrah
 - A classic example of how rebellion towards God leads to destruction – in this case, physically. But in our case – spiritually.
- **Genesis 13:5-13**
 - Here we read that Lot had herds, tents, flocks, etc. just as Abram did – so much so that the land could not support both
 - Abram realizes this and gives Lot a choice: if you go left, I’ll go right – if you go right, I’ll go left (vs 9)
 - Lot looks at the land and saw that the plain of the Jordan was well watered toward Zoar
 - So he chooses this piece of land
 - Notice the parenthetical statement in vs 10 – *“(This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)”*
 - Lot had a choice to make – just as we do today
 - Matthew 7:13-14 describes two roads that we have in life
 - Narrow road with small gate
 - Of this road, we are told to enter through this one – by Jesus himself (vs 13)
 - We’re also told that only a few find it (vs 14)
 - Broad road with wide gate
 - Of this road, we are told that many will enter through it (vs 13)
 - However, it leads to destruction (vs 13)
 - How easy is it to choose this broad road? Apparently very easy as we’re told that many walk this road
 - Especially given the fact that we see so many people in the world who are walking this road – some unaware, some willingly, and some who think they are actually walking the narrow road

- To further complicate things, many people walking this road may be doing better in this life than we are (materialistically speaking, better health, more popular, etc.)
 - Matthew 5:45 – “...*He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*”
 - But we must be strong and choose to stay on the narrow road – regardless of what happens
 - Consider the church at Smyrna
 - In Revelation 2, Jesus tells them that they are about to suffer
 - Some of them probably to the point of death
 - But Jesus says to not be afraid
 - For if they are faithful to the point of death, they will receive the crown of life (vs 10)
 - Regardless of what we see the rest of the world doing, let’s strive to remain faithful to God Almighty
- Lot looked up and noticed the excellent condition of the land that contained Sodom and Gomorrah – so Lot went east
 - You know the rest of the story, and we’ll get to it shortly – but when God’s judgment befell upon Sodom and Gomorrah, this land was no longer in excellent condition
 - This choice ultimately came back to hurt Lot
 - Just like Sodom and Gomorrah, those who look at the 2 roads in Matthew 7 and choose the broad road will regret that decision. As when God’s judgment comes, this road leads to destruction
- Genesis 18:20-21
 - The Lord says to Abraham “I want to see if Sodom and Gomorrah are as bad as the outcry that has reached me”
 - Obviously, the Lord did not need to physically witness what was going on as he already knew
 - But as we’ll see shortly, he gives them a chance to avoid total destruction – the same can be said for us today
 - As long as we are in the world today, we have the choice to be obedient or not
 - Mark 16:16 – there’s a choice here
 - Believe and be baptized – you’ll be saved
 - If you don’t believe (therefore, you can’t have a legitimate baptism) – you’ll be condemned
 - Matthew 12:36-37 – “*But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.*”
 - There will come a day when we have to appear before the Lord in judgment

- Romans 14:11 – *“As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.”*
 - Every knee will bow and confess eventually
 - Make the choice to do that now and do not submit yourself to eternal condemnation
 - As we’re about to see, the Lord gives Sodom and Gomorrah a little more time to repent
- Genesis 18:22-33
 - Here we read of Abraham pleading with the Lord on behalf of any righteous people in Sodom
 - Begins with 50 (vs 24)
 - 45, 40, 30, 20, 10 (vs 27-32)
 - Each time the Lord says: *“For the sake of XXX, I will not destroy the city.”*
 - Like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, we are given chance after chance to repent of our ways and give our lives to the Lord
 - And if we choose to do so, He will accept us back at any time
 - Consider the parables of Luke 15
 - The sheep wandered off due to ignorance (vs 4-7)
 - The coin was neglected (vs 8-10)
 - The young son was rebellious (vs 13)
 - Each time the Lord welcomed the lost back
 - Not only did the father welcome the son back, he was looking for him, ran to him, and celebrated his return (vs 20-22)
 - Of the sheep, we are told *“I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”* (vs 7)
 - Of the coin, something similar is said *“In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”* (vs 10)
 - 1 John 1:9 – *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*
 - Also, notice that God’s love for us continues regardless of the circumstances
 - Romans 8:31-39 – nothing will separate us from the love of God
 - Psalm 109:26 – God’s love is unconditional
 - Just as Sodom and Gomorrah received numerous chances here, we receive numerous chances as well
 - But notice – if we choose to walk away from God for whatever the reason, and we do not come back – destruction awaits us
 - For Sodom and Gomorrah – physical destruction
 - For us today – spiritual destruction
- Genesis 19:12-17, 23-29
 - Here we read of the destruction of 2 cities that at one time contained excellent land

- Genesis 13:10 – well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like Egypt
- Now, we read what was left of it after God’s judgment
 - Vs 24 – rained down burning sulfur on the cities
 - Vs 28 – in the aftermath, Abraham saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace
- Let me read you what you have to look forward to if you are not found a faithful servant when the Lord judges us
 - Luke 16:22-24 – *“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in the fire.”*
 - Matthew 3:10 – *“The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*
 - Revelation 20:14-15 – *“Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”*
 - The truth is that if you’re not a faithful servant of God’s, you should enjoy your time on earth – because it is the closest to heaven you’ll ever get
 - Just as Sodom and Gomorrah suffered physically, the unfaithful will suffer eternally
- In vs 12 – Lot and his family are warned to get out
- Just as Abraham predicted in vs 18:25 – the Lord did not destroy the righteous with the wicked
- Lot and his daughters escaped – vs 30
- Just as God saved Lot – He will save us as well if we are faithful
 - Matthew 24:15 – Jesus warns Christians of their sign to get out of Jerusalem shortly before it would be destroyed in 70AD
 - God pulled several people out of Jerusalem in multiple stages prior to its first destruction at the hands of the Babylonians in 586BC – Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego were among them (Ezekiel 1:1, Daniel 1:1-6)
 - 2 Peter 2:4-9 – *“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard) – if this is so, then the Lord knows*

how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.”

- Sadly, not all will accept God’s way out though
- Some will disregard the words of God, some will try to make it their own way, and some will not care
- Lot’s sons-in-law disregarded the warning – thought Lot was joking (vs 14)
- Lot’s wife looked back at the cities as they burned and were being overthrown despite being warned not to do so (vs 26)
- The many in the cities who caused the outcry in the first place were exceedingly wicked and unrepentant (vs 13)
 - Unfortunately, we all know people in these same states today
 - In the end, they will be destroyed spiritually
 - It is still our job to encourage them to be faithful (Ezekiel 3:16-22)
 - Ultimately, what they do with our encouragement is on them
- Finally, Lot and his family were told to go to the mountains for safety (vs 17)
 - Though Lot and his daughters made a pit stop in Zoar, they eventually settled in the mountains (vs 18-30)
 - This is not the only time that mountains are used to represent safety
 - Matthew 24:16 – *“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”*
 - Revelation 6:15-17 – many people tried to use mountains to hide themselves from the wrath of the lamb (these mountains were ultimately useless though – nobody can hide from the wrath of the lamb if they are unfaithful)
 - To avoid the destruction that sin would cause otherwise (Romans 6:23), we also have a mountain to flee to
 - Isaiah 26:4 – *“Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.”*
 - If we are found faithful, the Lord will protect us and will give us the crown of life (Revelation 2:10)
- Though God said He would never destroy the earth again with water (Genesis 7:12-17), He is going to destroy the earth and all its elements with fire (2 Peter 3:10)
- Even more critically, God has said that He will separate the wheat from the chaff – throwing the chaff into the unquenchable fire, while the wheat is safely stored in the barn (Matthew 3:11-12)
- If you are a faithful Christian – obedient to God’s commands, you will be protected as Lot was
- But if not, you have nothing to look forward to but total destruction as Sodom and Gomorrah received
- The plan of salvation is simple, will never change, and to deny it or not follow it for whatever the reason means that you will face the wrath of God (2 Thessalonians 1:8)
 - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*

- Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many
– *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
- **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16*
- **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10*
- **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3*
 - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
- **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38*
 - Baptism: immerse or submerge
- **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*