

How to Do Expository Bible Teaching (Part 8 of 9: Second Practical Example - Genesis 19)

Historic Faith Series on Expository Teaching

XVIII. Example No. 2: Destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19)

- a. This may be the *second most disturbing story* in all the Bible!
- b. Read **Genesis 19:1-29**.
- c. **Question:** Are there *any relevant passages* from the New Testament, or from elsewhere in Scriptures, that touch on or remind us of this story? We should look at those passages as well, as we are preparing an expository lesson on the **Genesis 19** story.
 - i. Read **Luke 17:22-33**.
 1. Jesus said that in the end, it will be like in the days of Lot: people taken *completely by surprise*.
 2. Jesus warned: "Remember *Lot's wife*."
 - a. We will need to take a close look at the role of Lot's wife in the story, to discern what Jesus wants us to learn from her example.
 - ii. Read **2 Peter 2:1-9**.
 1. Peter calls Lot a "righteous man" who is "tormented in his righteous soul".
 - a. Peter calls Lot "righteous" three times.
 - b. This statement alone demolishes the Calvinist tenet of total depravity, that "*no one*" has been righteous since the time of the Fall of Adam and Eve.
 2. The destruction of Sodom is an example of the judgement to come (by fire; **1 Peter 3:7**).
 - iii. Read **Jude v. 5-7**
 1. God saved the righteous few and brought judgment on all the others. He will do it again.
 2. The problem: sexual immorality; going after strange flesh (referring in this case to homosexual immorality).

iv. Read **Ezekiel 16:48-51**

1. The *sins of Sodom*: underlying sins included arrogance, living for pleasure, no concern for the poor, and a life of self-indulgence.

d. **Level 1:** The basic storyline, the facts.

- i. Two angels are invited in by Lot, who offers hospitality and a meal.
- ii. An immoral crowd gathers outside, demanding that Lot turn over his two visitors to them. Instead, Lot offers them his two daughters.
- iii. The crowd refuses the offer, and violently tries to storm the house.
- iv. The immoral crowd is struck with blindness by the angels.
- v. The angels issue a warning; only his wife and two daughters heed it (the husbands of the daughters do not take the warning seriously).
- vi. The two angels escort Lot, his wife and their two daughters out of the town, before it is to be destroyed. The angels warn them on departing, "Don't look back!"
- vii. Lot asks for an intermediate place to stay; his request is granted.
- viii. Lot's wife disobeys and looks back: she becomes a "pillar of salt".

e. People typically criticize Lot for offering his two daughters.

- i. **Question:** Why did he do that? Is it an indication of the low place of women in that society?

f. **Level 2:** Moral lessons for us.

- i. Lot offered hospitality to strangers.
 1. "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing *some have unwittingly entertained angels.*" (**Hebrews 13:2**, NKJV)
- ii. The Day of Judgement will come suddenly, catching most by surprise.
 1. There are four parallel judgment stories that foreshadow the final Day of Judgment (most see death; a few are spared), early in the Bible:
 - a. Flood of Noah (only 8 saved; the rest of the world destroyed).
 - b. Sodom and Gomorrah (only 3 saved; the rest in those cities all destroyed; destruction by fire).

- c. Passover (death to the firstborn of everyone in Egypt; only those protected by blood of the sacrificed Passover Lamb are spared).
 - d. Fall of Jericho (death to all; only the household of Rahab, people protected by the scarlet cord – similar to red blood of the Passover Lamb – are spared).
- 2. Note that the Lord will protect the righteous few in the midst of great destruction that comes on most of the people.
- iii. We must recognize and avoid the sins that led to the destruction of the people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - 1. Homosexual immorality and lust.
 - a. “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.” (**Jude 7**, NKJV)
 - b. As Paul said in **2 Timothy 4:2**, we need to preach the word of God “in season and out of season”, meaning when it is popular as well as when it is unpopular. It is increasingly ‘politically incorrect’ to address sins like these in certain parts of the world. However, the Scriptures (including **Romans 1:24-32**) are quite clear on this.
 - c. While we are on the subject, the goal is *holiness and sexual purity*, not heterosexual lust. Many will lose their salvation for other types of sexual immorality as well, including: heterosexual fornication, adultery, and remarriage after divorce (which Jesus said is adultery).
 - d. *Pray for the boldness* to address sin directly when you are doing expository preaching and come to passages like **Genesis 19**.
 - e. Christian teaching on sexual practice and marriage has been profoundly counter-cultural, from the beginning. Bardesan, also called Bardesanes (c. 154-222 AD) was a Syriac convert to Christianity who was familiar with customs throughout the ancient world in his time. In *The Book of the Laws of Divers Countries*, (found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 8, pp. 730-733), he wrote:

- i. "The Persians, again, have made themselves laws permitting them to take as wives their sisters, and their daughters, and their daughters' daughters; and there are some who go yet further, and take even their mothers. Some of these said Persians are scattered abroad, away from their country, and are found in Media, and in the country of the Parthians, and in Egypt, and in Phrygia (they are called Magi); and in all the countries and zones in which they are found, they are governed by this law which was made for their fathers....
- ii. "Among the Bactrians (in Central Asia, near modern-day Afghanistan), who are called Cashani, the women adorn themselves with the goodly raiment of men, and with much gold, and with costly jewels; and the slaves and handmaids minister to them more than to their husbands; and they ride on horses decked out with trappings of gold and with precious stones. These women, moreover, do not practice continency, but have intimacies with their slaves, and with strangers who go to that country; and their husbands do not find fault with them, nor have the women themselves any fear of punishment, because the Cashani look upon their wives only as mistresses...
- iii. "But in the North, and in the country of the Gauls (modern-day France) and their neighbors, such youths among them as are handsome the men take as wives, and they even have feasts on the occasion; and it is not considered by them as a disgrace, nor as a reproach, because of the law which prevails among them...
- iv. "Among the Britons many men take one and the same wife...
- v. "Among the Parthians (who lived in land in the northeastern part of modern-day Iran), on the other hand, one man takes many wives, and all of them keep to him only, because of the law which has been made there in that country...

- vi. “And what shall we say of the new race of us Christians, whom Christ at His advent planted in every country and in every region? For, lo! wherever we are, we are all called after the one name of Christ—Christians. On one day, the first of the week, we assemble ourselves together, and on the days of the readings we abstain from taking sustenance.
 - vii. “The brethren who are in Gaul do not take males for wives, nor those who are in Parthia two wives; nor do those who are in Judea circumcise themselves; nor do our sisters who are among the Geli consort with strangers; nor do those brethren who are in Persia take their daughters for wives; nor do those who are in Media abandon their dead, or bury them alive, or give them as food to the dogs; nor do those who are in Edessa kill their wives or their sisters when they commit impurity, but they withdraw from them, and give them over to the judgment of God; nor do those who are in Hatra stone thieves to death; but, wherever they are, and in whatever place they are found, the laws of the several countries *do not hinder them from obeying the law of their Sovereign, Christ.*”
2. Also, we must never forget that the underlying root sins of the people of Sodom included arrogance, living a life of self-indulgence, and lack of concern for the poor, as it says in **Ezekiel 16**.
- a. For those who may not struggle with homosexual lust, you may still be convicted by the other sins of that city, the ones pointed out by **Ezekiel**.
- iv. As Jesus warned us, we need to “Remember Lot’s wife.”
- 1. Don’t look back when fleeing this world.
 - 2. Similarly, when the Israelites were travelling in the Wilderness, many of them looked back longingly at their time in Egypt. Although they had been slaves in Egypt, they missed the tasty food they had enjoyed back there; and wanted to return.
 - a. Moses warned the people, and the future kings were warned as well (**Deuteronomy 17**) that they must never go back to Egypt (representing the old life).

3. There is a temptation for many Christians to look back longingly on the old life of sin. Resist that temptation; and flee from the world that is headed for destruction.
- v. Don't be surprised by the evil around us.
- vi. This story also is a reminder of the power of angels. God can use them to rescue us from *anything*.
 1. *Only two* angels decimated Sodom and Gomorrah.
 2. When captured in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said that He could ask the Father and have more than *twelve legions* of angels at his disposal. (**Matthew 26:53**)
 - a. One legion in the Roman army consisted of around 5,000 soldiers. I have no idea how many angels are in an angelic legion!
 3. In **Hebrews 1:14** it says that angels are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister *to those who will inherit salvation*". They are sent to assist humans like us.
 4. Paul reminds us in **Ephesians 6:12** that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against "... the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places". We are engaged in a spiritual battle, against spiritual beings.
- vii. The story of the destruction of Sodom not only foreshadows the Last Day; it also foreshadows the destruction of Jerusalem that would happen under Titus, in AD 70. Jesus also spoke about this event, in advance (**Luke 21:20-24; Matthew 21:33-46**)
 1. The people who would be in Jerusalem on that day were told by Jesus to: escape the city; flee to the mountains and not look back.
 2. Jerusalem, the wicked city, would be destroyed as Sodom was. However, a righteous few would escape right before it was destroyed.
 3. In **Daniel 9:24-27**, the prophet Daniel revealed the sequence of events that would happen, as follows:
 - a. Jerusalem would be rebuilt.
 - b. Christ, the Prince would come.
 - c. The Christ would be put to death.

- d. Then the city and the temple would be destroyed by the prince to come; and the temple sacrifice would be put to an end.
- 4. Eusebius, in *Ecclesiastical History*, recounts the horrific destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70, and the escape of the Christians from that city before destruction came.
- 5. Justin Martyr also spoke about this event in his *First Apology*, which was addressed to the Romans. Justin reminded the Romans that they had completely devastated Jerusalem, in fulfillment of prophecy; and that any Jew caught entering it afterwards would be put to death.

XIX. Is There More to This Story? – Another Look at the Third Level

- a. If the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed foreshadowing both the Day of Judgment and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, perhaps we should take another look at some of the details in the story again, with that in mind.
- b. Let us take another look at the facts; to see if they might be foreshadowing something more than what we have discussed thus far. The events that unfolded included:
 - i. An evening meal, in a home, with guests.
 - 1. The feet of the guests were washed.
 - 2. They ate a meal that included unleavened bread.
 - ii. Two are offered to the violent crowd.
 - iii. In the end, destruction comes upon the city where the wicked crime was done.
 - 1. A righteous few are warned in advance; and escape the city before it is destroyed.
 - 2. Prophecy of the impending destruction is given, but scoffers reject the warning.
 - 3. The city is totally devastated because of the crime perpetrated by the wicked crowd.
- c. **Question:** Does this series of events *remind you* of anything in the New Testament?
 - i. **My Answer:** This reminds me of the events surrounding the death of Jesus. Consider the parallels:

1. The Last Supper: an evening meal, with guests, feet are washed (**John 13**) and unleavened bread is served (the Passover meal).
 2. Before Pilate: two are offered to the wicked crowd (Jesus and Barabbas)
 3. Destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70: the people in the wicked city are punished and the city is destroyed, in fulfillment of prophecy. A righteous few escape.
- d. **Reconsidering an Earlier Question:** Why did Lot offer his two daughters to the wicked, violent crowd, in **Genesis 19**?
- i. While I can't say for sure, I can think of one possible reason why this happened.
 - ii. ***IF*** the story of Lot and the destruction of Sodom is a true 'third level' foreshadowing of the last days of Jesus, then Lot offering *his two daughters to the crowd* might have been allowed to happen to foreshadow the two who would be offered to the violent crowd before Pilate: Jesus and Barabbas.
 1. I cannot say this with any kind of certainty; but offer it for your consideration.
 - a. You can decide for yourself whether this is more like *The Old Man in the Mountain* (a naturally occurring coincidence) or more like *Mount Rushmore* (deliberately designed that way).
 2. Sometimes odd details are included in Old Testament stories (like the command to not break any of the bones of the lamb when eating the Passover meal) for reasons that only make sense hundreds of years later, when the type (foreshadowing) is replaced with the antitype (the reality).