

First Southern Baptist Church Bible Study - December 4, 2019

Sodom and Gomorrah - Chapters 18-19 (1)

Introduction

1. Issues
 - divine judgment and mercy (Lot?)
 - God's foreknowledge
 - would God spare for some in the city?
 - is God fair? - what about when the Israelites destroy a whole city?
2. What does this have to do with the son promised to Abraham and Sarah?
 - the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is woven into the story of Abraham and God's covenant... what's up with that?
 - will the morally corrupt world in which we live derail the promises and the work of God... that has been progressing across the last century?
 - a just God in an evil world

I. Pre-Sodom/ Destruction

1. Abraham and Sarah had both undertaken their own plan for a child
 - Hagar - Sarah
 - Eleazar - servant, is Abraham's plan
 2. Contrast between Lot and Abraham
 - Lot is lost and Abraham blessed
 - contrast their wives - Sarah and the pillar of salt
 - both men show hospitality to the strangers...
 - ...from Abraham's "tent"
 - ...from Lot's "gate"
 3. The "men" includes the "Lord" and two messengers (angels)
 - angels unawares
 4. The news about Isaac comes through the visitors to Sarah (18:10-15)
 - Sarah is bitterly amused (12)
 - shows us just how miraculous the claims of these men are
 - "I did not laugh" - Sarah lies, to the messengers just as Abraham had lied to Pharaoh and Abimelech concerning his wife (calling her his sister)
 5. Abraham talks with God about the treatment of Sodom - with an eye to Lot?
 - the issue of sparing the city for the righteousness of some - 18:16-33
 - Abraham intercedes for Sodom/ and the innocent in her
 6. God reveals to Abraham what is about to happen (17-18)
 - God's circle of trust
 - revelation is God's prerogative - happens in dreams and revelations
 - there is no precedent for negotiating with God - Moses saw God face to face but this is beyond that
- Why reveal this to Abraham?
- 1) complaints against Sodom - "outcry" (verse 20)
 - 2) divine election (verse 19) - He may bless or judge whom He will
 - blessing Abraham includes making him into a righteous person and peoples

- 3) the treatment of the Sodomites puts in clear perspective the two different ways to live
- 4) God is investigating... to “know” if it is really that bad
 - this shows that God is just... He doesn’t just go about destroying peoples (look at his treatment of the Ninevites in Jonah’s day)
- 7. God condescends to man
 - A. He appears as a man
 - He hears out a man
 - He saves a man
 - B. In talking to Abraham, He shows that He is a God who may be appealed to - what mercy!
 - a unique appeal to God on behalf of people
 - Moses appealed to God on behalf of his people (Ex. 32:11-14), but here Abraham appeals to God on behalf of wicked foreigners
 - Abraham shows great compassion... how unlike the attitude of Jonah
 - C. Abraham’s reasoning... if the cities are destroyed, you will destroy the innocent as well
 - The Moral Dilemma (18:23)
 - 1) you will destroy the innocent
 - 2) or... if you spare the wicked go scot-free
 - See Chapter 19... neither of these outcomes happen!
 - D. From “fifty” to “ten”
 - God does not require any “arm twisting” to get Him to consider mercy
 - Abraham does not take the part of the wicked,... he is just saying that if God is fair, He must spare the righteous
 - his arguments are humble... “just once more”
 - praise God for those who intercede, as did Abraham

II. What is the Sin of Sodom?

- 1. Homosexuality
 - A. The word for “know” is “yada”
 - NIV it is “have sex”
 - NIV - at 19:8 it is “slept with”
 - Lot does not “know” he has committed incest (irony)
 - B. All the city is involved (chapter 19)
 - our prison population is example - the culture of sodomy
 - Rome was a place of extreme sodomy
 - even Lot seems to have “adapted” to the moral decline
 - C. Romans 1 tells us how we get there
 - “*ponerous*” evil - aggressive, growing evil
- 2. Violent, stage - rape
- 3. Debates with God about how corrupt the city is... the scripture answers that question - “see it is corrupt”
 - Lot is unable to save his guests
 - Lot himself has become corrupt... offers his daughters
 - the extent of their moral “blindness” is seen in their hostilities toward Lot

4. When the world was evil/ “wicked” in Noah’s day... it was destroyed
When the city was evil/ “wicked” in the days of Babel... it was destroyed
Here, God is being consistent with His character... and practice
5. “I will go down and see” (18:21)
“The Lord came down to see” - in Babel
5. Sodom’s sin is
 - “great”
 - “grievous” - literally, very heavy

III. God’s Work in a Corrupt Society

1. The evil of this society could not derail the blessing and purpose of God
2. Lot is “righteous” but offers his daughters?
 - 2 Peter 5:8 - calls Lot “righteous”
 - when he is compared to his Sodomite neighbors he is a moral man
 - both Noah and Lot end their lives/ careers in a state of drunkenness
3. Even “righteous” Lot has been corrupted
 - Noah was called “perfect” - was he morally perfect, or relatively perfect?
4. How does this story relate to the remainder of the Bible?
 - A. As with Noah - God will intervene to judge - in His time
 - B. His judgment is right
 - window given into His insight
 - window into how bad things really are - how bad people can become
(In Noah’s day their thoughts “imagination” were on evil continually)
 - C. In the end - God is right
 - on top of things... even when they seem bad -or He appears to be asleep
 - He is fair (just get rewarded - evil get punished)
 - D. Shades of the rapture... Lot removed before judgment falls
 - Noah, and family are removed, before judgment falls
 - Rapture... Christians are removed, before judgment starts
5. How do we relate to a corrupt society? - intercede as did Abraham
6. In the end, God’s work marches on
 - in the end, God will judge
 - in the end, God’s way is always right!