

The Influence Of Sodom

Introduction. Genesis 13:12 says, "Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom." Lot chose what was good for his livestock rather than what was good for his family (Genesis 13:5-12).

The wickedness in Sodom was exceedingly great (Genesis 13:13; 19:2-5, 9-11). But God would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah if only a few righteous people could have been found there (Genesis 18:22-33). Thus, Abraham lowered the number 50 to 45, and then to 40, 30, 20, and, at last, 10. Evidently, not even ten righteous people could be found there.

Not only did Lot's family live in Sodom, but Sodom began to live in Lot's family. The influence of Sodom was devastating. Let us notice what the influence of Sodom did.

I. ***It Caused Respect For Parents To Decline***

- A. It is evident that the sons-in-law did not hold Lot in high regard (Genesis 19:14).
 - 1. They did not take the older and wiser Lot seriously. The sons of Eli did the same (1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25).
 - 2. If they would have had proper respect for Lot, they would not have been consumed in the fire and brimstone.
- B. When Sodom (or the world) lives in one's heart today, respect for parents and the elderly declines.
 - 1. We are living in an evil time when much disrespect is shown toward parents and adults in general (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20).
 - 2. In a poll of 504 principals attending the National Association Of School Principal's Convention in Orlando, FL, 89% said they faced profane language and provocative insults toward teachers or other students on a regular basis (From USA Today, 3-11-97, p. 6).
 - 3. God demands respect for the elderly (Leviticus 19:32; 2 Kings 2:23-25). For children, the parent's word is final, whether it be concerning friends, sports, dates, curfew, or attending the assemblies.

II. ***It Caused A Reluctance To Flee Evil***

- A. The angels had to lead Lot and his family by the hand out of Sodom (Genesis 19:15-16).
 - 1. Remember, they were leaving behind lewd homosexuality, ruthless behavior, and total unrighteousness (2 Peter 2:6-9).

2. You would think that Lot and his family would have been "long gone" before now. Furthermore, when the angel gave commandment to depart, you would think they would have rejoiced and quickly left.
 - 3 Evidently, the influence of Sodom hindered them. Walt Kelly wrote, "We have met the enemy and he is us."
- B. Today, Christians are commanded to flee ungodliness (1 Corinthians 6:17-18; 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22).
1. Evil takes many forms and there are many passages in the New Testament which define evil for us (Romans 1:29-31; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5-7; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; 2 Timothy 3:2-4).
 2. We need to run from evil, not to coddle it, embrace it, or to play around with it.
 - b. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, he responded by saying, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:1-12).
 - c. God makes the rules, and we are wise when we abide by them.

III. ***It Caused Fear To Reign In The Place Of Faith***

- A. The angels told Lot and his family to escape to the mountains, but incredibly, Lot was too afraid (Genesis 19:17-22).
1. He said, "I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die."
 2. Later, he became afraid to dwell in Zoar, and goes to the mountains (Genesis 19:30).
- B. The influences of the world encourage and breed fear.
1. God does not give the spirit of fear to his people (2 Timothy 1:7). Paul was not ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1:16-17; 2 Timothy 1:12). The fearful face a fearful end (Revelation 21:8).
 2. During World War II, a military governor met with General George Patton in Sicily. When he praised Patton for his courage and bravery, the general replied, "Sir, I am not a brave man -- the truth is, I am an utter craven coward. I have never been within the sound of gunshot or in sight of battle in my whole life that I was not so scared that I had sweat in the palms of my hands." Years later, when Patton's autobiography was published, it contained this statement by the general: "I learned very early in my life never to take counsel of my fears."
 3. Fear can occur in many ways:
 - a. Fear to talk to neighbors about salvation.
 - b. Fear to correct brethren when needed.

- c. Fear to overcome ridicule.
 - d. Fear to take an active part in the Lord's work.
 - e. Fear to stand for the truth.
4. Fear resides with those who are habitually fearful. Let us not take counsel of our fears -- dwelling on them continually -- but wholly trust in the living God who replaces fear with power and love.

IV. ***It Caused A Yearning For The Earthly***

- A. The command was, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you ..." (Genesis 19:17). The influence of Sodom caused the yearnings for the earthly to be stronger than the willingness to obey God (Genesis 19:26).
 - 1. Lot's wife may have looked back out of curiosity; that is, because she wanted to see the manifestation of God's wrath on those wicked cities.
 - 2. No doubt, she had ties and interests in Sodom.
 - a. Like the rich young ruler, no doubt, she hated to leave behind all her worldly possessions. She was not given time to pack.
 - b. She probably thought, "If I look back and see if the cities are not really being destroyed. If not, I will go back to Sodom."
 - c. Thus, her looking back was a sign of unbelief -- doubting that God would do what He said He would.
- B. Whatever the reason for her looking back, when she disobeyed, God turned her into a pillar of salt. She was struck dead on the spot (1 John 2:15).
- C. The Lord had said, "Don't look back."
 - a. God said to Adam and Eve: "Don't eat" (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:23-24).
 - b. God said to Uzzah: "Don't touch" (Numbers 4:15; 2 Samuel 6:6-7).
 - c. God says to us: "Don't forsake" (Hebrews 10:25-27).
 - i. We like to think that we can disobey God and still get by, but we cannot.
 - ii. God is to be feared and revered (Hebrews 10:28-31; 12:28-29). We tend to beg people into obedience, but we had better fear Him (Matthew 10:28).

V. ***It Caused Immorality To Take Root***

- A. The influence of Sodom was still very much in the hearts of Lot's daughters, even though the city itself had been destroyed (Genesis 19:30-38).

1. No doubt, they, along with their father, had seen and heard the filthy conduct of the wicked, and its influence had rubbed off on them (2 Peter 2:7-8).
 2. Instead of committing adultery with their father, they could have gone back to be with Abraham and his household and there found men to marry.
 3. They had been so influenced by Sodom that fornication was no longer evil to them.
- B. In similar fashion, one cannot feed his mind on the garbage of this world without consequences.
1. "In describing one of the new movies of the day, a critic wrote, 'The plot moves rapidly down the sewer.' He adds, 'It would not be so damaging to those who watch such trash if the mind could be equipped, like your kitchen sink, with a garbage disposal. Then, you could flush away all the filth and be done with it, but the mind does not work that way. It stores up impressions for a lifetime. The only way to protect the mind is to expose it to only the best!'"
 2. Certainly, if one is so inclined, there is a mountain of garbage he can focus his mind on today by many, many means. There is an old saying that goes, "When one lies down with dogs, he will rise up with fleas."
 3. Let us, in obedience to Christ, think on holy, righteous, spiritual matters (Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 4:23).

Conclusion. It was not a sin for Lot and his family to live in Sodom. The sin came when Sodom started living in them. Jesus said that His disciples were in the world, but they were not of the world. We must live in this world, but the world must not live in us. Let us not be conformed to this world (Romans 12:1-2).