

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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*Eleventh Anniversary Issue!*

What Are You Doing In Your Seat? (Part 4)

Genesis 19:1; Daniel 2:49

Last month we discussed that God saw the men of Sodom as “*wicked and sinners...exceedingly.*” We described the words wicked and sinners in detail and I mentioned that I would make an application to our modern American society. There has always been wickedness throughout the world and even in the United States. Some have an idea that the United States was almost a perfect society between its founding in the colonial era until the 1960's. This is not a true view. Wickedness did exist and was practiced in various forms in colonial times on through the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I will agree though, as an avid reader of history, that some things are different now than they were throughout our nation's history. As a whole, the colonies, and later the nation of the United States, tended towards godliness and the desire to follow God. Again, there were wicked people doing ungodly things, but they were more the exception than the rule, and the morals of society were dictated by the standards of God's Word. Since the 1960's, it seems as if our nation has begun a downward spiral towards complete and utter godlessness. Rather than using God's Word as the standard, it has been rejected and replaced with man's own ideas and opinions.

Much could be said as to what happened over the last 50 years, but that would make an entirely separate message and is beyond the scope of this current one. I will quickly mention just a few parallels between Sodom and the United States before we move on to our next thought. As I mentioned last month, God just summarized the sins of Sodom in Genesis 13:13. That alone would be enough to condemn the city, but in Ezekiel 16 God lists some of their sins. One was pride. For whatever reason the people of Sodom were proud.

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Perhaps it was the buildings; maybe it was the currency that was the strongest in the region; maybe it was the efficiency of the government; it could have been the climate. I have no idea what it was. I listed just a few that come to mind that could have made them full of pride. Whatever it was, it caused them to turn away from God and depend upon themselves. We have no history of Sodom from the Flood until Genesis 13. It is only mentioned one earlier time in Genesis 10. However, those who settled in that area were all descendants of Noah. All life was destroyed in the Flood, and Noah and his three sons were all believers. It was from them that the whole earth was populated. Some settled in the area and developed the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah. In just 400 years, the towns degenerated from being founded by grandsons of Noah to the vile wickedness that God would destroy. Obviously, there are some details that could be brought out, but it seems amazing that in 400 years, not a long period of time, the area could go from being founded by believers to being judged by God. Surely, Noah and his sons taught the children what had happened, but somewhere in the passage of time the people turned away from God and depended completely on their own abilities—they were full of pride.

We know nothing else about the founding of Sodom other than its mention in Genesis 10. That chapter describes the expansion of the descendants of Noah around the world. We cannot say for certain who founded the city and how long after the Flood it was founded. The people could have been early descendants of Noah who rejected God, and the city could have been founded by unbelievers. But it also could have been founded by believers and over the course of 400 years degenerated into the city that God determined to destroy. Their pride—their self-sufficiency—their lack of needing God—brought about the fire of judgment.

In just 400 years they were characterized not just by pride but also “*fulness of bread and abundance of idleness.*” These both, no doubt, contributed to their pride. They had everything they needed. The land was very good land as described in what Lot saw. It brought

forth plenty to eat. Famine was the furthest thing from their mind. The land almost produced without hard work. Perhaps that contributed to their “*abundance of idleness.*” The land was so prosperous and yielded so much, they did not have to work as hard as other cities. Do you see the United States described with those words as well?

I go back to the pride that characterized Sodom. The United States should be humbled that God has blessed us so much. But many think that we arrived where we are because of our own ingenuity and ability. But any achievement, any victory, any accomplishment was a direct result of God’s great hand upon the people of this country. This country accomplished what it did because the people in the early days prayed to God, and God responded with bountiful blessings. Now people are saying that the United States has produced great achievements. The United States did not produce the people who achieved great things—God produced them. This nation, as a whole, is full of pride in what we are doing and what our forefathers did previously. We must repent of that pride and humble ourselves before God.

The hard work of previous generations in dependence upon God brought about the great blessings of God. We have “*fulness of bread*” and think it is because we have figured out how to irrigate the land and how to develop seeds that are resistant to disease and pests. This nation is abundantly blessed and the land is very prosperous. In much of the country you can plant a rather small garden and grow enough for your family to have immediately and store up the rest for the winter. You may have more than enough and give crops away. It is not because of your talent or ability. It is the bountiful grace of God. We have more than enough and think that we do not need God.

This abundant blessing has brought about idleness. Statistics show that on average, people work less than in any previous generation. We have more vacation time and free time than ever before. But we spend less time in church than ever before. People

have more time on their hands, but they spend it doing less than ever before. God commanded that we work by the sweat of our face—he meant for us to work hard. But this nation has produced a generation of children and young people that do not want to do anything. They sit around watching television and playing games rather than being active in work or doing some kind of physical, playful activity. God condemned Sodom for this and is not happy with this nation for its lazy, slothful way of life.

God also condemned Sodom for its lack of care for the truly destitute and needy. There are those who, for whatever reason, are really poor and in need. The people of Sodom had refused to help them. It is interesting that the word strengthen is used to talk about what Sodom did not do. Perhaps what Sodom did was not genuine help for the needy. Perhaps it was just enough to make themselves feel good, but kept the poor and needy in the same state. This may be stretching the understanding of the verse, but I think it might be a genuine application—what Sodom did may be akin to our modern form of welfare that does not truly help most people, but keeps them in the persistent state of being poor and needy. More, no doubt, could be said, but God listed as an iniquity of Sodom their lack of help to the poor and needy.

God then says, “*They were haughty.*” This is very similar to pride. For the second time in a listing of the sins of Sodom, God mentions pride. Throughout the Bible God declares that He hates pride. In fact, all sin is just an outgrowth and development of pride. It is a great stench in God’s nostrils for His creation to think that they are greater than Him and do not need Him. He judged Sodom and will judge any nation that is haughty before Him.

The final sin that God judged Sodom for is described in Ezekiel 16:50 as “*abomination before me.*” There are many sins that God called abomination, but combined with the act of the men in Genesis 19, we know that the abomination that Sodom committed is homosexuality. No society that legalized or acknowledged this

abomination as normal survived for long. In Leviticus 18, it is one of the sins that God lists as resulting in His judgment upon the nations of Canaan. These sins in Leviticus 18 caused the land to vomit out the inhabitants. All of these sins are despicable and deserve God's judgment, but the sin of homosexuality seems to be the end result of a downward spiral away from God. You cannot get much further away from God than to condone what God condemns. By the time you receive this, our courts will have determined how much of God's law we have now refused to accept. All societies who went this far felt God's judgment in some form. This includes Sodom, Canaan, and Rome. How God will judge the United States I cannot say. But judgment came to the others, and it will come our way as well.

I mentioned earlier about 400 years being the time from the Flood to God's judgment on Sodom. Do you realize that the first English settlement in what is now the United States was 400 years ago? We are coming up on the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pilgrims coming to the New World. It only took 400 years for Sodom to degenerate to the point where God literally poured out His judgment and destroyed it. Will the people of the United States repent of their sins or will they continue in them and warrant God's judgment?