

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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What Are You Doing In Your Seat? (Part 3)

Genesis 19:1; Daniel 2:49

Last month we finished with a few statements about The Commentary that God gives about Sodom in Genesis 13:13. We talked at length about Lot's choice based upon what he saw with his physical eye. It is no accident that verse 11 describes Lot's departure from Abram and verse 12 tells us that he pitched his tent toward Sodom. Verse 13 stands out as if God is condemning Lot's choice. I believe wholeheartedly that God is condemning Lot's choice. As we know and will see in the course of this message, Lot's choice ruined his life. He should have paid attention to God's opinion. Obviously, Lot did not have the written Word as we do, but he could have received God's will about the matter through a vision or dream, if he had really wanted to know God's will.

But notice what God says about Sodom in Genesis 13:13—*“But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.”* This is God's divine decree concerning the condition of the people of Sodom. It is not some person's opinion as to what they think of the city. This is what God says in the middle of recording Lot's and Abram's choices. It cannot be said enough that God saw the place as wicked and eventually deserving of judgment, but Lot saw it as a beautiful place where he could rear a family and perhaps become prosperous. Whatever went through Lot's mind, and for much of it we can only speculate, he only saw the physical beauty and prosperity of Sodom, and not its spirituality. We must be careful about our reasons for going to a certain college, marrying someone, taking a job, moving to a city, joining a church, or any other choice in life. We must discern God's opinion and will about everything in life. Neglecting to seek His will may result in catastrophe, as it did with Lot.

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Let us look at the words that God uses to describe Sodom in Genesis 13:13. The first word is wicked. This word is used 623 times in the Old Testament. It indicates moral deficiencies, or moral qualities that injure oneself and others. In some instances it is used to describe those involved in idolatry. In other places it talks about those with pride, resentment, and resistance. It speaks of those who are violent to others. There are many things described by that word wicked, and Sodom, no doubt, was guilty of them all.

Think through that definition of wicked. It talks about moral deficiencies, or to phrase it another way, the lack of morals. Sodom was lacking in basic morality. What does that mean? We know because of the ten commandments given to Moses in Exodus 20 what basic morality is. There are many other thoughts that we could mention, but the ten commandments is a good starting point. Basic morality would be the worship of the true God, respecting His name and not taking it in vain, setting aside one day out of seven for His worship, honoring parents, not stealing, killing, committing adultery, lying, or coveting. Sodom was lacking in this basic morality. No doubt, they were worshiping false gods, and committing these sins and others to the degree that God identified them as wicked.

The word wicked goes on to describe those involved in idolatry. We covered that in describing basic morality, so I will not say anything else about it. The word then talks about those with pride, resentment, and resistance. Because of this meaning of wicked, we can know that Sodom was filled with pride. Perhaps they were proud of their achievements as a city. Perhaps they had beautiful buildings that no other town had. Perhaps their school system provided a good foundation for their children. On and on we could go speculating as to what caused their pride. Whatever it was, it brought God's wrath. They thought they were great in comparison to others, so great that it led to resentment of other towns.

The word wicked also means resentment. In the town itself, the well-to-do looked down upon those that did not have as much. They

resented the fact that they had to have such people in town. Perhaps some of them wanted to remove all of the poor from the town. As a whole, the town may have looked down on towns around them. “The beauty of Sodom could not be matched,” they thought. Maybe they said, “It is a shame that Sodom has to be close to towns that look so bad.”

But wicked also talks about resistance. Resistance to what? For them, it could have been a resistance to God’s warnings. There is no record in this passage that God sent warnings to the city. You could argue that God is a merciful God, and always offers grace and mercy before pouring out judgment. I would not argue against that thought. Did God offer Sodom a chance to repent? Genesis does not record it, but perhaps He did. If He did, the people, being wicked, resisted the offer of repentance. In their pride, they saw no reason to turn to God. They liked the sin that they were involved in and would not turn away from it.

The final description of wicked is being violent to others. This would involve child abuse, rape, assault, and murder, among others. The people in Sodom lived and practiced violence. There may have been those in Sodom who tried to justify some of it. Some may have thought the violence was a byproduct of all of the success that the city was enjoying. There may have been some who wanted to do something about the violence, and they may have offered suggestions, but no lasting remedy could be found. “Sodom is achieving so much,” they thought. “We will get the violence under control at some time,” some said. “Right now, we must continue on our path to greatness.”

This is the city that Lot looked at. It seemed so wonderful that he moved to it. But we have just spent several paragraphs detailing how God saw the city. And that is just with the word wicked. Genesis 13:13 also describes Sodom as “*sinners*.” It is interesting to note that the word sinners refers to habitual actions, and the one committing those actions is subject to punishment because of their practices.

While wicked describes what they are doing, sinner says that they are doing it repeatedly. Just one time would have been enough to deserve God’s judgment, but the people of Sodom did not just commit one sin. They habitually violated the law of God. They committed one sin and enjoyed it so much that they committed sin after sin. Their sins were mounting up and judgment was bound to come because of their multiple sins.

We must be mindful of the reality that sin and wickedness will be judged by God. Just as with the word sinners, the word wicked also results in judgment. In many passages where wickedness is detailed, God often warns about or dispenses judgment. So both words—wicked and sinners—result in God’s punishment. Many think that they can enjoy their sin without any consequences, but that is not true. Satan, through his devils, has dispensed the lie that you can do what you want and nothing will happen to you. But God throughout His Word says that sin and wickedness will bring judgment. You can find mercy if you ask forgiveness, but to reject His mercy will bring His judgment.

Genesis 13:13 continues with the phrase “*before the LORD*.” This is the very foundation of what makes something right or wrong. The people of Sodom were probably thinking that everything was all right because they said that what they were doing was right. Their standards of right and wrong were the basis of their city laws. Perhaps their motto was, “If it makes you happy, then do it.” But how it makes you feel does not determine right and wrong. Some people ask, “Who determines what is right and wrong?” The answer is very clear—God does! His Word tells us whether something is right or wrong. We are not left to our opinions. We must understand, believe, and accept that God determines right and wrong.

One other word is found in Genesis 13:13—*exceedingly*. As you can imagine the word means much or abundance. It would have been bad enough if Sodom would have been described as being wicked and sinners “on occasion.” But as we saw, sinners by itself describes

habitual practice, and God emphasizes their continual sin by closing the verse with the word exceedingly. There was nothing good about Sodom, and Lot should have done everything to stay away from it. He should have looked at Sodom as God looked at it—as a place devoted to wickedness and soon to have God’s judgment. But he did not and paid the consequences.

In Genesis 13, we find the sins of Sodom summarized, but in Genesis 19 and Ezekiel 16 we find some details of their sin. Genesis 19 describes the abominable desire of the men of Sodom to commit homosexuality with the angels (who were in the form of men) that had come to help Lot escape. That desire is despicable, but Sodom was also guilty of other sins. Ezekiel 16:48-50 describes Sodom as being guilty of pride, fulness of bread, abundance of idleness, not taking care of the poor and needy, being haughty, and committing abomination. All of these details are summarized, as we saw, in the words that Genesis 13:13 uses to describe Sodom—wicked and sinners.

But lest we think of ourselves as better than Sodom, the people of today in the United States are committing the same sins that Sodom committed. We will make application of this truth next month.