

## The Guilt of Sodom

Ezek. 16:46-49

### Introduction:

1. Most of the time when we think of Sodom we think of Gen. 19. We remind ourselves of how the men of Sodom sought to forcefully have sexual relations with the two men sent to Lot to deliver him from the destruction of the city.
2. From this point forward Sodom is referred to throughout Scripture as a low mark representative of the level of moral depravity to which men may sink.
3. But in the text we have just read it is not her sexual depravity that is the focus. Instead it is her arrogance and her unwillingness to help the poor and needy.
4. Like Sodom we are greatly blessed in our society. Many in the Lord's church have abundant food and live lives of ease. And while we condemn the sexual depravity of Sodom, are we guilty of withholding help from the poor and needy?
5. When I listen to the political views of some Christians it might be interpreted that they are adamantly against welfare and social programs. It would appear that they are cautious and hesitant and sometimes even restrictive, in their use of first day of the week contributions to help people.
6. While we condemn the sexual depravity of Sodom are we like them in not helping the poor and needy?

### Discussion:

- I. Ezekiel 16 condemns Jerusalem and Judah for being worse than Sodom.
  - A. The passage speaks in a figure of Jerusalem having two sisters.
    1. Samaria is one. She is the older sister. Samaria was the capital city of the northern kingdom (Israel).
    2. Sodom was the younger sister, who had been destroyed in Gen. 19 for her wickedness.
  - B. God compares Jerusalem to her sisters.
    1. God said, "You have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they" (v. 47).
    2. "Sodom, your sister and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done" (v. 48).
    3. "Samaria did not commit half of your sins, for you have multiplied your abominations more than they" (v. 51).
    4. "You have made your sisters appear righteous by all your abominations which you have committed . . . they are more right than you" (vs. 51-52).
  - C. It is not that Samaria and Sodom are excused, but that Jerusalem needs to see the intensity of her sinful violations. She needed to see her sin as worse than the sin of Sodom. She needed to be ashamed and bear her disgrace (v. 52).

II. But it is not sexual sin that is the issue. It is arrogance and the misuse of riches that is the consideration (v. 49).

- A. Economic prosperity characterized Sodom (Gen. 13:10).
- B. Moses had warned Israel of the temptations associated with economic prosperity in Deut. 6:10-12. But by the time of Solomon economic prosperity has led the people away from the Lord (1 Kings 4:20ff; 10:1ff).
- C. It was God who had blessed Israel and it was God who had blessed Sodom. It was God who had blessed Jerusalem. Wealth, per se, was not the problem. It was their attitude toward it. Many misquote the Scripture saying, "Money is the root of all evil." But Scripture says, "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10).
- D. It was the love of wealth that was the problem in Sodom and now in Ezekiel's day in Jerusalem too!
- E. This same love was evident in Jesus' day.
  - 1. Lk. 10:30ff. The Levite and the Priest in the Good Samaritan story.
  - 2. Lk. 12:13ff. Rich man tore down barns.
  - 3. Lk. 16:14-15. The Pharisees values were reversed from God's.
  - 4. Lk. 16:19ff. The rich man and Lazarus.
  - 5. Lk. 18:18ff. The rich young ruler.

III. Ezekiel describes Sodom's guilt (crime) as being arrogant, having abundant food (stuffed with food; gluttonous) and living in careless ease (comfortably secure), but she did not help the poor and needy (v. 49).

- A. The implication here is that Jerusalem was acting similarly. The challenge for us is are we acting the same way? We might never associate ourselves with Sodom's image of homosexual gang rape, but are we living lives of abundance and ease while not helping the poor and the needy? In our desire for money are we raping others?
- B. Fear might lead us to do something like this. As people get older they may wonder how they are going to provide for themselves when they are no longer able to work like they did in their youth. So, they worry about what they are going to eat and how they are going to clothe themselves. Cf. Matt. 6:25ff.
- C. Others just have no concept of God's promises and focus only on preserving and/or enjoying themselves in this life (cf. Matt. 6:19-21; The rich man of Lk. 12:17ff; 16:19ff).
- D. In some ways such a focus is a lack of faith in God's willingness to provide (Matt. 6:25ff).
- E. God had blessed Sodom and Jerusalem and God has blessed us.
- F. BUT Sodom did not help the poor and needy.
  - 1. Evidently Jerusalem did not either.
  - 2. The rich man of Lk. 16 did not help Lazarus.
  - 3. And we can become so focused on our security that we neglect the poor too. And we need not think here only of the poor physically. If someone is spiritually impoverished we need to work to supply that need too (Matt. 5:3, 6).
- G. N.T. Christians did.
  - 1. We read about it in Acts (ex. 2:45; 4:32ff; 11:29).

2. It was characteristic of the Christians of Galatia, Macedonia and Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1ff).
  3. They looked to the example of Christ who, though He was rich, became poor, so that through His poverty they might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9).
  4. They supplied the spiritually impoverished with the message of the gospel.
- H. Paul speaks of God “making all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed” (2 Cor. 9:8).
1. His perception seems to be that God has given you blessings to be used for others.
  2. Read 2 Cor. 9:8-13.
    - a. God is the source. He supplies seed to the sower and bread for food.
    - b. You are enriched for all liberality.
    - c. The result is that needs are supplied and God is glorified.

#### Conclusion:

1. We need to be thankful for what we have.
2. God has lavished His blessings on us—in His Son and in granting us many physical things.
3. Let us not be like Sodom and Jerusalem, mere consumers of the blessings of God, arrogant in our self-focus, as we enjoy our abundant food, and secure lives of careless ease.
4. Instead, let us do good, be helpers of the poor and needy, generous and ready to share, so that we might take hold of that which is life indeed (1 Tim. 6:17-19).