

Genesis 19:1-11 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth <sup>2</sup> and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." <sup>3</sup> But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

<sup>4</sup> But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. <sup>5</sup> And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." <sup>6</sup> Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, <sup>7</sup> and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. <sup>8</sup> Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." <sup>9</sup> But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down.

<sup>10</sup> But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. <sup>11</sup> And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

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## Announcements:

1. Baby Dedication: May 9th Email: Maegan
2. Baptism: May 16th email: me
3. Evangelism Workshop: Wednesday May 12th evening

## Genesis 19:1-11 | Sodom

We can just about all agree on the show Stranger Things. Its a nostalgic romp about monsters in the suburbs and that's just plain fun. Does everyone remember where the monsters come from? They call it "the upside down." It is a grotesque and decaying picture of the very same town they live in, but where everything is monstrously inverted. That is the setting of the story today. It is in the upside down. Sodom is upside down.

Now upside down is such a wonderful term because it implies that there is a right side up! A way that things are supposed to be, a proper and true ordering of creation. This is a biblical framework for understanding the world. The Garden of Eden is the right side up and pointing towards God. When we rebel against God we only turn upside down.

In the story of Sodom we see the wickedness of Sodom, Lot's appeasement, and the only hope of rescue.

# 1. The Upside Down

Genesis 19:1 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth

Lot is found sitting in the gate of the city. This position shows that Lot had a place of authority within the city and was deeply involved in the happenings of Sodom.

Lot saw the angels, and offered to them the same flavor of hospitality that we saw Abraham offer. Showing honor by meeting and bowing in their presence. He invited them into his home to stay the night, but they pushed back a bit instead opting to stay in the town square. But Lot pushes back, and strongly. We can see that Lot knows his city, there is no life in the town square at night.

Genesis 19:3 But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

He prepares a feast just the same as Abraham. But there is haste in the preparation. Unleavened bread is to be made and eaten quickly. There is no leisure standing by under the shade tree, as Abraham was able to offer. All of the details of the story point towards something terrible brewing just around the corner from the vision of the angels, and Lot seems to be shuffling them through so that they do not come in contact with the reality of Sodom. But the reality of Sodom comes knocking at the door.

Genesis 19:4-5 But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. <sup>5</sup> And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."

Here we are shown by the text the inversion of Sodom. We are given a picture of the anti-eden. There are three features that demonstrate this inversion;

**First** the totality, which we see in that every single man of the city of sodom gathered at the door. Indiscriminate of age. To the last man they were there. This means it isn't a generational breakdown, where only the young men were there as they rebelled against the elderly. No all the passions of the city were aligned.

**Secondly**, we see the inversion demonstrated in Sodom in the homosexuality. The text is clear to emphasize that it is only men outside the door repeating men three times, and showing the group of men ask to have sex with the men who are inside. This is a picture of the inversion of Eden. Where sex was coupled with the blessing and command of fruitfulness. It is a picture of

turning away from the other, and turning in on ourselves. The picture is of an act of fruitfulness that moves towards nothing. You see this is time frittered away in mere amusement for the sake of our own self-satisfaction.

**Finally** we see this inward turn results in a sense of entitlement. Now we can see the entitlement, because the men demand to be able to know the strangers. There is absolutely no consideration of the agency of the people they are seeking. The only reigning value is the satisfaction of the mob. Do you see when we turn away from God we turn in on our own passions and force them onto the world irrespective of who it hurts?

This is the inversion of Eden. A complete, inward turned, fruitlessness.

## 2. Lot's Appeasement

Genesis 19:6-7 Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him,<sup>7</sup> and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.

Lot, ever the host, tried to place himself in between the mob and the angels. But notice the positioning, he is outside the door with the mob and the door is closed behind him. He talks to the men outside, and he refers to their actions as wicked, but notice he also refers to them as brothers. It is a posture not of true defense, but of appeasement. That means he will adopt something of their values in order to get them to leave him alone. Outside, removed from the angels, alone with the Sodomites, we see the depth to which Lot will go.

Genesis 19:8 Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof."

Lot himself, sinks to the same depths as his opponents. Sacrificing his own family, his own daughters whom he ought to protect. We can see this apparent value of hospitality has twisted into some idol as it becomes the reigning value in Lot's life. His own offspring are disposable. Sacrificed to the values of the mob. In many ways Lot's actions are the most despicable in the story. We are shown clearly here that Lot does not stand over the sodomites. He stands alongside them. Outside the same door with the angels on the inside. But his appeasement doesn't work.

Genesis 19:9 But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down.

Lot has jeopardized his family, enraged his townspeople, and put them all in intense danger. He is now pressed down against his own door nearly killed by those he tried to appease.

### 3. Lot's Rescue

Genesis 19:10-11 But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door.

<sup>11</sup> And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

The angelic men who came to rescue Lot out of the city, perform their first rescue of Lot from the city itself as they reach out to where he is and pull him into where they are. Lot is rescued.

The men are left on the outside, and they are struck with blindness. They are now isolated amongst themselves, slavishly groping towards their own desires. This is the fruit of Sodom. Blind and enslaved to your own desires. This is the anti-eden. Remember the last time we saw Sodom it was the picture of worldly opportunity as the King of Sodom offered Abraham a similar kingly status. Sodom has a trajectory we can see all around.

**Sodom is any mode of being that places your personal satisfaction as the center of reality. That is the great inversion.** And it doesn't leave you liberated, it leaves you blind and groping slavishly after your desires. I think internet pornography is the perfect image of Sodom in our culture. Alone in your blindness, slavishly compelled by your own desires, the world exists for your satisfaction. And it doesn't matter who gets hurt in the process.<sup>1</sup>

As the angels curse the men of the town, they also rescue Lot. This is the mystery of our story. Why rescue Lot? We are meant to identify with Lot, and become equipped to identify the sodomite structures in our own world. But notice, we don't get to stand outside of the structures we identify. Sodom even rages within those who are saved from it. So why is Lot saved. Well we can't see it in today's section, we have to zoom out to the end of the story that we will see next week.

Genesis 19:29 So it was that, When God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow...

Lot was counted righteous by God, because God remembered Abraham. This is the twist of Christianity. Lot has this speck of faith, and God is willing to count that faith as righteousness. God saves by grace alone.

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<sup>1</sup> If you'd like information on how to combat that sort of behavior in your own life, the best book I've read on it is called Unwanted by Jay Stringer.

And it is more than that. Because when God remembers Abraham, he doesn't just mean he remembers the man. He means he remembers the promise that he gave to Abraham. And the promise is that through him the whole world will be blessed. A world which when left to its own devices will look like Sodom. But it will mean more than sending angels. It will be God's own son Jesus Christ, who comes into the wicked city. And the crowd will gather at the door and demand that Christ be crucified. And Christ will offer himself so that sodomites like us will be saved. He will go to the bottom of the inversion, so that we might be set upright.