

Genesis 18-19

Worldview: The Life and Death Nature of God's Word

What Was the Real Sin of Sodom?

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To many anti-gay Christians, I'm nothing more than a "sodomite" who is damned for all eternity. It doesn't matter that I've spent the last decade immersed in the Bible, ancient biblical languages, and the Christian theological tradition. It doesn't matter that I've dedicated my life to preaching, teaching, and ministering to all people, including the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. The simple fact that I'm an openly gay man makes all of that irrelevant. To anti-gay Christians, God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in chapter 19 of the Book of Genesis is a warning to people like me.

Ironically, I believe that these anti-gay Christians actually have it backwards. The true sin of the Sodomites as described in the Bible has nothing to do with same-sex acts per se. Rather, the ancient Sodomites were punished by God for far greater sins: for **attempted gang rape**, for **mob violence**, and for **turning their backs on strangers and the needy who were in their midst**. In other words, the real sin of Sodom was radical inhospitality. And, ironically, it is often anti-gay Christians who are most guilty of this sin today.

Excerpt from *What Was the Real Sin of Sodom?*

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-patrick-s-cheng-phd/what-was-the-real-sin-of_b_543996.html

Yale historian John Boswell offers four possible reasons for the destruction of Sodom:

- (1) The Sodomites were destroyed for the general wickedness which had prompted the Lord to send angels to the city to investigate in the first place; (2) the city was destroyed because the people of Sodom had tried to rape the angels; (3) the city was destroyed because the men of Sodom had tried to engage in homosexual intercourse with the angels...; (4) the city was destroyed for inhospitable treatment of visitors sent from the Lord.[1]

<https://www.str.org/articles/what-was-the-sin-of-sodom-and-gomorrah>

Scripture tells us of Sodom's sins:

Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. **They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it.** (Eze 16:49-50)

The sin existed prior to what happened in Genesis 19:

Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD. (Gen 13:13)

Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know." (Gen 18:20-21)

The law punished homosexuality:

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. (Lev 18:22)

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. (Lev 20:13)

Scripture points to sexual immorality as the cause for Sodom and Gomorrah's punishment

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day-- just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, **which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire**, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. (Jud 1:6-7)

if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by **the sensual conduct of the wicked** (2Pe 2:6-7)

Scripture points to homosexuality as a result of God "giving them up to dishonorable passions"

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the **men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another**, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (Rom 1:26-27)

Scripture makes clear that those who practice homosexuality will not inherit the kingdom of God

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1Co 6:9-10)

Next Week: Genesis 20-21