



When we come to Genesis 19 ... we read the end of Sodom and Gomorrah's story. But theirs is a long story of moving ever further away from God. We first hear about the cities of the plain when Lot made his choice to move there. Then in chapter 14, we read that for twelve years these cities had been subject to Kedorlaomer, a ruler from the region Abram had left. The cities of the plain rebelled against Kedorlaomer in the thirteenth year.

And in the fourteenth year Kedorlaomer, with three other kings and their armies came and re-conquered the entire region, seizing all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and taking captive all the people, including Lot.

When Abram heard what had happened, he mobilized in order to rescue Lot. With 318 men of his own household and with the three men who were in alliance with him, Aner, Eshcol and Mamre and those with them, Abram pursued after and routed the four kings and their armies and recovered all that they had taken.

When Abram returned home, he was met by two kings – Melchizedek, king of Salem, who was a priest of the Most High God, and Bera, king of Sodom, who had escaped and hid when his army was defeated.

King Bera... and the people of Sodom who had been rescued by Abram, heard with their own ears the spoken testimony regarding God, who... in Melchizedek's own words – is **“God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, who delivered Abram's enemies into his hands.”**

The people of Sodom who had been taken captive additionally had seen with their own eyes... what God had done through Abram, in defeating an enemy much greater than him.

Because of what God Most High had done through Abram, the people of Sodom had been spared... from a life of slavery or worse. They had experienced firsthand the mercy of God.

But here's what is surprising.

There is no record in the scripture of these people responding to God's mercy... with gratitude.

There is no evidence that they enquired that particular day or came back another time asking Melchizedek how they might know the Most High God and live in relationship with him.

The only record we have of what took place between Genesis 14 and 19 is the testimony of God Himself when he spoke with Abram.

In Genesis 18:20 – God identified two things...

Genesis 18:20-21
Then the LORD said,
“The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah
is so great and their sin so grievous,
that I will go down and see
if what they have done is as bad
as the outcry that has reached me.”

Who cried out to God?

Individuals who had been harmed by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.
God did not provide specifics.

Whose assessment determined that the sin of the people was very grievous?

It was God...and he did so on the basis of his own blazing holiness, and his uncompromising purity.

And again, God did not provide specifics.

But here’s what is known based on what God had said to Abram in Genesis 15.



From Genesis 14 through to Genesis 19 the people of Sodom and Gomorrah continued to add to their sin until... in the words of Genesis 15:16... it had reached its full measure.

What does that mean?

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah had exhausted the mercy of God.

In the time of Noah, God told him, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth.”

Why did God decide to do this?

The reader is provide in Genesis 6 the answer... because every inclination of the thoughts of every person’s heart was only evil all the time... all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.

But do you realized that for approximately 100 years while Noah built the ark, God waited.

And while God waited, Noah not only built... he preached... to his generation about the righteousness of God... he spoke to them of sin and judgment.

When the day came to go into the ark, only Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, entered.

The rest of humanity had decided Noah was nuts and God was not real.

For those who lived in the time of Noah and those who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Abraham... their sin reached a point of no return.

In repeatedly rejecting God... and choosing what was unnatural... they reached a point where they placed themselves beyond God’s grace.

Here we must press in again to a truth we considered last week for it is crucial to understanding Genesis 19... and in doing so, we will use the language of Scripture.

Human beings live in a universe lovingly created by the triune God.

We live in a world that has everything we need, not only to survive, but to thrive.



natural / unnatural

It is natural... in light of what God has done for us... for human beings to daily express gratitude to their Creator.

But sin so twists the heart that humanity chooses... the unnatural – which is a sense of entitlement and ingratitude.

It is natural... for human beings to worship their Creator... for his Otherness, for his brilliant majesty, his unparalleled holiness, for his unfathomable love, his never-failing faithfulness.

But sin so twists the heart that humanity chooses... the unnatural – which is to worship themselves and all manner of lesser things.

In a universe overflowing with and permeated by the goodness of its Creator it is natural... that humanity would love and delight in goodness.

But sin so twists the heart that human beings choose... the unnatural – and love what is evil and delight in perversity.

In a universe of abundance because the Creator is generous, it is natural ... for humanity to act towards others with similar compassion and generosity, especially towards the needy and vulnerable.

But sin so twists the heart that human beings choose... the unnatural – and selfishly take for themselves at the expense of others.

Like the story of the prodigal son, where the father lets his son leave his home, Romans 1 teaches... that when humanity chose to live life on their own terms, to decide for themselves what is right, God gave humanity over... he let them go...

God did so, not to rid himself of us, but with the hope, that in experiencing the bitterness of sin... for without exception, sin always leads to death... and in every generation this has been an inconvenient truth...

a person might come to their senses and respond to the triune God who lovingly pursues them, calling them home to himself.

As human beings move away from God and what he created to be natural... they will instinctively gravitate towards the unnatural.

This is what sin does without exception – it corrupts the heart to love what is unnatural.

This should not surprise us.

The Bible says the human heart is deceitful and beyond cure.

This is why we need a Rescuer.



I want us today to address the elephant in the passage...

To that end we look to the scripture – that Psalm 119 says are a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

Elizabeth Elliot wrote...

The Word of God I think of as a straight edge, which show up our own crookedness. We can't really tell how crooked our thinking is until we line it up with the straight edge of Scripture.

Elizabeth Elliot

What does the Bible say about the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Isaiah 1:10-17

Hear the word of the LORD you rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

Your hands are full of blood !

Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong.

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.

Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

Isaiah 3:9

Jerusalem staggers, Judah is falling;
their words and deeds are against the
LORD, defying his glorious presence.
The look on their faces testifies
against them; **they parade their sin
like Sodom; they do not hide it.**

Jeremiah 23:14

They are all like Sodom to me...
They commit adultery and live a lie.
They strengthen the hands of evildoers,
so that no one turns from their
wickedness.

Ezekiel 16:49

This was the sin of your sister Sodom: she
and her daughters were **arrogant, overfed
and unconcerned; they did not help the poor
and needy. They were haughty and did
detestable things before me.** Therefore,
I did away with them as you have seen.

2 Peter 2:4-8

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment;
if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its **ungodly** people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;
if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the **ungodly**;

2 Peter 2:4-8

and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by **the depraved conduct of the lawless (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)—**
if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.

Jude 7

In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns **gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.**

Let's summarize these Scripture passages.

What was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah?

focused on self	did wrong	over-fed
lived a lie	shed blood	lawless
haughty	arrogant	ungodly
flaunted their sin	adulterers	

refused to help the poor
did detestable, depraved and perverted things
gave themselves up to sexual immorality

All of the sins which the Bible identified... concerning Sodom and Gomorrah are but symptoms.... of what?

Of a heart that had been invaded and radicalized by sin.

This is what Jesus taught.

Mark 7:15

Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.

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Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.

Matthew 15:19-20

For out of the heart come evil thoughts – murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person...

If there is no Creator, if human life is the result of chance plus long periods of time, so that there is no absolute truth, except what a person decides for themselves... then of course, no one can tell anyone what they should or shouldn't do in any matter, including their sexuality...

But if there is a Creator... and he designed humanity – body, soul and spirit – as intricately and gloriously as he designed the universe and hung the galaxies in space – if the Creator, further, as an act of pure goodness, provided clear direction as to how human life is best lived... then it is of the utmost folly for humanity to ignore the triune God and do what is right in their own eyes, defining goodness on the basis of their own fallenness.

That said, what is God's intent for human sexuality.
We need to know this in order to understand why God judged the people of Sodom as he did.

In Genesis 1 we read that God designed the vegetation and creatures of the earth, that they might be fruitful, and increase in number.
God did the same with human beings.
But there is one profound difference.

Genesis 1:27
**So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.**

Male and female human beings are image bearers.
And as such our sexuality is defined by the One who made us in his image.

This truth provokes our culture.
But the Scripture is clear – because we are made in the image of God... we are not our own. See 1 Corinthians 6:19.

John Stotts writes that human beings derive their meaning, not from within, but from outside of themselves, from the Creator God who made them.

The triune God says who we are.

And he spells out... clearly... how life is best lived.

The great angst experienced by many in our culture; the root of much mental illness, is when individuals believe and embrace the lie... that they can define themselves; that they can instill upon themselves worth and dignity.

All efforts to do so... without the triune God... lead to profound disappointment and emptiness.

God said this to our first parents regarding the responsibility he gave to them...

Genesis 1:27

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:28

“Be fruitful and increase in numbers; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Humanity is to be fruitful and to increase in number in order that on God’s behalf, we might collectively rule over the earth and its creatures.

While it may seem obvious, we still need to ask - how is humanity to be fruitful and increase in number?

Through procreation.

And in what context does procreation happen?

This is a significant question.

Look at Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:21-25

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh.

Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

Do you see what God did?

He created the woman from the man.

Though she was human – bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh as Adam said.... she was different.

As soon as he had created her, God brought the woman to the man.

God presented Eve to Adam.

Why does the Scripture use this specific language?

Why does it describe this action of presenting?



Because it was... a wedding.

No sooner was Eve created, than God joined her life.. in marriage... to that of Adam's.

Genesis 2 continues....

Genesis 2:21-25

That is why a man **leaves**
his father and mother
and is **united to his wife,**
and **they become one flesh.**

Adam and his wife were both naked,
and they felt no shame.

Adam didn't have a father and mother to leave.
But his children would.

This first wedding was the template for all future marriages.

At a wedding there is a leaving... a forging of a new family unit comprised of a man and a woman.

At a wedding there is a uniting – which is articulated and realized by the speaking of vows and promises of the man to the woman and the woman to the man.

The wedding covenant is the context that allows for a man and a woman to become one flesh... to be naked and feel no shame.

While one flesh does describe sexual union, it is so much more.

One flesh also describes the union of heart and mind and soul that develops within the parameters of a marriage covenant.

We must ask another question.

Why did God... on the basis of what he did in Genesis 2... purpose for sexual intimacy to be enjoyed only within the parameters of a marriage covenant entered into by a man and a woman?

Sexual intimacy is like glue that joins together the spirits of a man and a woman.

Show piece of paper glued together.

When people practice casual sex, and disregard the Creator's instruction... what they fail to understand is that they are gluing their soul to another and when they move on... their soul and that of the person they were with...experiences a tearing...

Attempt to pull apart the two glued pieces of paper.

If a person engages in intimacy with multiple people... their soul will experience multiple tears. **This is not God's best.**

But why a marriage covenant?

And why a marriage covenant between a man and a woman, between two who are different, male and female?

Ephesians 5:29-32

**[Christ feeds and cares for his church]
– for we are members of his body.**

**“For this reason a man will leave his
father and mother and be united to his
wife, and the two will become one flesh”**

**This is a profound mystery – but I am
talking about Christ and his church.**

The marriage covenant reveals a profound mystery.
What is that mystery?

God purposed that the joining together of a man and a woman as husband and wife would reflect, the relationship within the triune God...

... and what his gospel of grace achieves – the joining together of the life of Jesus Christ with those he has rescued and made to be his church.

A marriage covenant is entered into in the presence of the triune God, who is considered to be both the primary witness and the faithful helper to a man and a woman who make vows and promises to each other with the understanding that the covenant they are entering into is binding until death separates them.

When a person responds to God's gracious pursuit of them, and receives Jesus, they enter into the "new covenant"....

... forged by Jesus when he gave his life in sacrifice...

... a covenant in which God commits himself to us... as we commit ourselves to him...

... a covenant by which he promises to faithfully complete in us... what he has begun...

... a covenant in which he promises to be with us... always.

The marriage covenant functions like a strong fortress within which a husband and a wife can build a life together – certain that come what may, they will be there for each other.

And the triune God to whom we belong through the new covenant, he is a mighty fortress, from whom no one can snatch us away.

We belong to God forever.

This is why the making of a marriage covenant so important in the Christian faith. This is as far as we will go today.

In light of what we have considered, we can say this with certainty... it was sin that had reached its limit that resulted in God's judgment coming upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

The sin of Sodom was not just sexual.

We detailed what the Scripture said.

All of their sin, including their sexual sin... was said by God to be grievous and perverse.

The people of Sodom, over an extended period of time... had turned away from God and increasingly loved what was unnatural, corrupting both themselves and others and God's good creation.... until tragically they placed themselves beyond the mercy and grace of God.

The scriptures tell us that the gospel of God is both good and bad news.

Listen to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and with this we close.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived:

Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters
nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men
nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards
nor slanderers nor swindlers
will inherit the kingdom of God.

This list is illustrative and not conclusive... every sin is not detailed.

The worldview of humanity without God, in every generation... exerts tremendous pressure upon the followers of Jesus to soften, to change, to adapt the breathed out words of God given to us in his Word.

We are told very clearly in this verse – **do not be deceived.**



The followers of Jesus will be repeatedly tempted, at different points and for varying reasons... to remove or push to the edge... truths within the Bible. Doing so, weakens our faith and puts it at risk of collapsing.

The gospel of Jesus makes no compromises with sin.

It calls sin what it is.

But look at the astounding news of the gospel.

It doesn't leave a person who believes in and receives Jesus as a slave to sin.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11
Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?
Do not be deceived:
Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11
And that is what some of you were.
But you were **washed,**
you were **sanctified,**
you were **justified**
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
and by the Spirit of our God.

Every follower of Jesus has a before... and an after story.
We used to be... such and such... you fill in the blanks of your life.
But that is not who we now are. Why?

Because we were able to reform ourselves? No.
Because when we responded to the God of grace who pursued and revealed himself to us and granted us faith to believe... we were...

washed
sanctified
justified

In Jesus Christ the old has gone and the new has come.
By the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, God the Spirit, we are freed from the power of sin, death and the devil.

The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.
Everyone?

Yes, everyone - the sexually immoral, the idolator, the adulterer, the homosexual, the thief, the greedy, the drunkard, the slanderer, the swindler...

There is not any expression of the sinful human heart that is beyond the power of the gospel to save – that is beyond the working of God's Spirit to cleanse, to sanctify, and to justify.

What a great salvation there is in the triune God!

Genesis 2:

God is not the Creator... then the idea of sin as an offense against him makes no sense.

This story in Genesis 19 will not lead to worship, but offense... unless the focus of the reader is upon the holiness and majesty of God. Let
This is the only lens that will make sense of the story of the Bible.

Hundreds of years later, when God came down in the cloud and stood with Moses on Mt. Sinai, the LORD proclaimed to Moses who he is, Deuteronomy 34:6-7:
“The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

Who is the LORD?

He is compassionate.

He is gracious.

He is slow to anger.

He is love.

He is faithful.

He forgives wickedness, rebellion and sin.
He punishes the guilty.

Recap: when a person has been pursued by Jesus and has responded to his grace, believing in and receiving Jesus, they are born of the Spirit.
A miracle of new creation happens within them.

What is that miracle?

The triune God sets them free from their nature that had been radicalized by sin and the god of this age who had taken them captive to do his will.

The Scripture describes the miracle like this – the old has gone, the new has come.

The new is a new nature, a new heart that is alive to God and responsive to him. This new nature is nurtured by the Word of God and the Spirit of God who takes up residence within a follower of Jesus.

God's intent is that the new nature will displace old habits of sin and be replaced by the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control - and new habits that emulate Jesus in word and deed.

A follower of Jesus, born of the Spirit begins to live in God's story.

Fact be told... every one of us has always lived in God's story – in him we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

Psalms 24:1

But as a race, humanity, since the exile from Eden... have ignored the unmistakable evidence of the triune God.

In fact, every generation has suppressed the truth by their practice of sin.

Every generation has refused to thank and to worship the Creator God from whom they have received their very life, and whose image they bear.

Every generation has exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and in doing so, their thinking became futile, their hearts were darkened, and their lifestyle became unnatural and corrupt.

Our generation and our culture are no different.

We have created our own narratives and fabricated our own lenses to try and bring life into focus and make sense of it... on our terms.

Last week I mentioned several lenses.

Let me place them before you again before we begin unpacking Genesis 19.

This list is by no means exhaustive.



- The lens of evolution – everything in the universe is the result of chance and long periods of time... there is no Creator...
- The lens of relativism – there are no absolutes... except what a person feels
- The lens of “my truth” – truth and purpose are to be found within a person... what is true for you is true... and what is true for me is true... ultimately what that means is that there are 8 billion truths in the world
- The lens of transgenderism – if there is no creator than mistakes can happen – if there is no creator than the possibility exists for a person to experience discontinuity between what they perceive to be the sex of their inner person and their biological sex... this lens advocates that when that is the case, the sex of the body must be chemically and surgically changed to align with the sex of a person’s inner self – this lens demands affirmation from all ...and forbids any questions or discussion – this lenses roots a person’s identity in being transgender

- The lens of sexuality – this lens view sex as recreational - if consensual, all sexual activity is acceptable
- The lens of race – this lens views racial discrimination by western culture as systemicand advocates for a radical cure - the dismantling of all structures which it has corrupted...
- The lens of climate change – insists that humanity’s current way of living is unsustainable; the proposed cure requires governments to enact radical, immediate changes... this lens purports that government is capable of fixing the earth – this lens like transgenderism... allows no room for discussion; to do so is to be labeled a climate change denier

What is the lie our culture has embraced?

There is no Creator God... who spoke everything into existence.

There is no triune God...who made us in his likeness and to whom we are accountable.

And there

And so in our culture, where everyone does what is right in their own eyes, we see the evidence of spiritual and moral lostness.

Because the universe and all of life is the result of chance, truth is individual and personal.

That it is up to us to define who we are and for what purpose we live.