

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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SODOM & GOMORRAH

What were the inhabitants like? Who tried to rescue Sodom twice? Why did God destroy these cities?

By Gregory Dullum
Part 2

Abraham's nephew, Lot, chose to live in Sodom, which was surrounded by fertile land. The area was compared to the Garden of Eden (Gen. 13:10-12). It was the perfect place to live—except for one thing—the *inhabitants!*

“But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD” (Gen. 13:13).

Why Sodomites Were Evil

Why were the men of Sodom so evil? Here are two main reasons:

1. They were Canaanites (descendants of Canaan), and they continued to practice the sexual sins of their ancestor, Canaan (see part one).

There were Canaanites living in the Promised Land when Israel left Egypt and came to Canaan. What were they like at that time?

God told the Israelites: “According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.... None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD” (Lev. 18:3, 6). Verses 6-20 describe those “near of kin” with whom they should NOT have sex—but *the Canaanites did!*

Verse 21 says, “And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.” The Canaanites were guilty of killing children (today we have a similar problem but we call it abortion) and profaning God's name (which is also very common in today's society).

“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Nor



drawing by Greg Dullum

Because they were so wicked, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by God, who rained down fire and brimstone on them.

shall you mate with any beast, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before a beast to mate with it. It is perversion. Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by ALL THESE the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants;... (for ALL these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled)” (vv. 22-25, 27, emphasis added).

Canaanites were known for committing many kinds of sexual sins, baby killings and profaning God's name. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were Canaanites. They did the things that Canaanites did.

2. When a land is *very blessed*, the inhabitants don't have to spend all their time eking out a meager living. When people have more free time on their hands, they tend to gravitate away from God and toward sensual pleasures.

“Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: she and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness...” (Ezek 16:49). Because

Sodom had fullness of food and abundance of idleness, the inhabitants wanted something to *stimulate their senses*.

God told the ancient Israelites that He was giving them THIS *abundant* land. He warned them that if they weren't careful, they would forget God and become *just like* the people they were displacing (Deut. 8:7-14, 17).

War Comes to Sodom

After Lot settled in Sodom, war came to this peaceful valley. Four kings allied together and attacked Sodom, Gomorrah, and three nearby cities on that plain. The four kings conquered Sodom and Gomorrah and forced them to pay tribute for 12 years (Gen. 14:1-4).

But in the 13th year, the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, and its three neighbors rebelled. So the alliance of four kings attacked again. This time, they carried off a lot of goods and took some people as slaves. One of them was Lot (Gen. 14:11-12).

What did Abraham (then called Abram) do? “Now when Abram heard that his brother [meaning his relative, for Lot was actually his nephew—Gen. 12:5] was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people” (vv. 14-16).

Thanks to Abraham and his personal army, Sodom was saved! This was not the only time that Abraham attempted to save Sodom.

SODOM & GOMORRAH

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Sodom & Gomorrah

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Trying to Save Sodom Again

“Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, ‘My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant.’ And they said, ‘Do as you have said.’...”

“Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on their way. And the LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing...?’...”

“And the LORD said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know’” (Gen. 18:1-5, 16-17, 20-21).

Who made the outcry against Sodom? One person probably was Lot, who cried out to God in prayer, for he was bothered by their evil deeds (Gen. 19:9, 2 Pet. 2:6-7). God also may have heard the cries of victims who were hurt by the evil done to them. God says He hears the cries of the oppressed (Ex. 22:21-24, Ps. 10:17-18).

“Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. And Abraham came near and said, ‘Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’”

“And the LORD said, ‘If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes’” (vv. 22-26).

Abraham talked God down to 45, 40, 30, 20, and finally 10 righteous people. If there were 10 righteous people, God promised He would not destroy Sodom.

Abraham had rescued Sodom in the past. He thought he had done enough to save it again. He was wrong.

Angels Arrive at Sodom

“Now 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 he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, ‘Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant’s house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.’ And they said, ‘No, but we will spend the night in the open square.’ But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate” (Gen. 19:1-3).

Keeping Company With Evil

Why did Lot insist so strongly? Because he knew how *depraved* and *violent* these homosexual men were. In spite of that, he continued to live among them!

1 Cor. 6:18 tells us to “Flee sexual immorality.” Lot never saw a need to flee this city. Why? Perhaps he had a nice home, a good job and family connections. It is likely that he enjoyed the physical blessings of living in this well-watered, lush land! Perhaps he thought he could live there and not be tainted by his surroundings.

The Bible tells us it’s easy to be affected by others around us. Prov. 27:17 says, “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” People influence others around them, both for good and for evil. Elsewhere in Proverbs we read, “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed” (Prov. 13:20). We also read, “Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their heart devises violence, and their lips talk of troublemaking” (Prov. 24:1-2).

We can’t get away from all evil, or we would have to leave the world and live on the moon. The apostle Paul recognized that fact when he wrote, “I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world” (1 Cor. 5:9-10).

There is a DANGER when righteous people live in the *midst* of an *evil society*. The more we come in contact with sin, the more *desensitized* we are to it. The first time we hear a bad word, we might be shocked by it. But if we hear it often enough, it loses its shock value. We might even start using the word ourselves. The first time we see a bloody scene in a movie, we may close our eyes or turn away. But if we watch enough of these scenes, they no longer bother us.

The first time we see homosexuals in a movie or TV show, we might be shocked or sickened by their abominable behavior. But if we see them often enough, we become more accepting. The motive behind the “gay agenda” today is to make their depraved behavior seem normal. That’s why we see so many homosexual characters in movies and TV shows. In addition, homosexuals are depicted as victims of discrimination in the news. Instead of declaring homosexual behavior as deviant and an abomination to God, our media portrays it as something normal or good. The media wants us to feel sorry for homosexuals—claiming they are being treated unfairly.

Did Lot become desensitized? The Bible says he remained righteous. He is called “righteous Lot” in 2 Pet. 2:7-9: “and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.”

Although Lot was righteous, he was probably influenced by his neighbors. Certainly his family was affected to a far greater degree than he was.

Some of Sodom Rubbed Off

Notice what happened when Lot entertained the two angels. “Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally.’ So Lot went

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out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, and said, 'Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!' " (Gen. 19:4-7).

Lot called these homosexuals "my brethren." He TRIED to appear as one of them. The homosexuals, of course, *knew* he was NOT one of them. They thought of him as a stranger who judged (condemned) their sinful activities!

At this point, they became angry and violent with Lot, just as we often see anger and violence displayed by militant homosexuals today.

Lot offered them an alternative to having homosexual relations with his two guests. His offer was *perverted*, showing he was NOT *completely unaffected* by his society. He told the homosexuals, "See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof" (v. 8).

Lot offered his two VIRGIN daughters to these depraved men to sexually assault. Lot also had sons-in-law who had married his daughters (v. 14). How could his daughters be virgins if they were married to sons-in-law?

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's *Commentary* offers two possibilities:

1. The two daughters living with Lot were unmarried, but he had other daughters who were married. If this were true, why weren't the two married daughters mentioned when Lot warned their husbands of the upcoming destruction? Only the men are mentioned (v. 14).

2. The two daughters living with Lot were betrothed to the sons-in-law, so they were considered to be married even though they had not yet had their weddings. This seems the most likely scenario. Or, we can take this scenario a step further, and assume that the daughters were fully married to the sons-in-law, but the men were bisexual or homosexual

and preferred having sex with other men over having it with their wives.

The men surrounding Lot's home had no desire for his daughters. Spurning his offer, they attempted to rape Lot.

"And they said, 'Stand back!' Then they said, 'This one came in to sojourn, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.' So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. But the men [angels] reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. And they struck the men who were at the doorway with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door.

"Then the men said to Lot, 'Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.'

"So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, 'Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!' But to his sons-in-law, he seemed to be joking" (vv. 8-14). Lot's sons-in-law were so corrupted by the society around them, they thought Lot was joking! Perhaps they saw Sodom, NOT as a *city of sin*, but as a *city of love*! Everyone just LOVED everyone else, *no matter their sex or relationship*. Why would God want to destroy people who expressed so much love? (They of course, did not understand the TRUE meaning of love! Homosexual "love" is NOT love. It is *depravity* and an *abomination*.)

Sodomites Had 'Gay Pride'

Not only did the men of Sodom *sin*; they were PROUD of their sins! They were haughty!

"Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had PRIDE, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the needy. And they were HAUGHTY and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit" (Ezek. 16:49-50, emphasis added).

Their haughtiness is further described by the prophet Isaiah: "The look on their countenance witnesses against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it" (Isa. 3:9).

The people of Sodom were full of pride and were haughty. This is the *original* case of GAY PRIDE!

We can read more about the qualities of

the men of Sodom in 2 Pet. 2:6, 10: "and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;... and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries."

This sounds a lot like many people in our world today!

Lot Rescued from Sodom

Let's see what happened to Lot and his family. "When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, 'Arise. take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.' And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him and set him outside the city.

"So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, 'Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.'

"Then Lot said to them, 'Please, no, my lords! Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.'

"And he said to him, 'See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.' Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar" (Gen. 19:15-22).

God COULD NOT DESTROY the evil society surrounding Lot *until* Lot had been removed to a *place of safety*. LOT HAD TO FLEE. What happened after he arrived in his place of safety?

"The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities and what grew on the ground" (vv. 23-25).

What is the significance of Sodom and Gomorrah for us today? We'll answer that question when we conclude this series next month.

(To be continued!)

Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. How many days did the Israelites mourn for Aaron after he died?
2. What did Moses have to do to stop the plague of serpents?
3. Who took Aaron's place when he died?
4. Whom did Balak the king of Moab ask to curse the Israelites?
5. To whom did the Levites give their tithes?

(Answers on page 5)

You Shall Not Commit Adultery

What is adultery? Must we be married to commit it? Does it always involve sex? Why is adultery wrong?

By Gregory Dullum
Part 11

Soon after God created the first man, He realized the man was incomplete. "And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helper comparable to him'" (Gen. 2:18).

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and He removed one of Adam's ribs. From that rib, God made a woman and brought her to him.

"And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (vv. 23-24).

This was the *beginning* of MARRIAGE. Marriage is defined as "The legal union of a man and woman as husband and wife" ("Marriage," *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1992, p. 1102). Marriage was NOT created by man; it was an institution ordained by God.

Why do humans marry?

1. Men and women marry to complement each other. In areas where one is weak, the other is strong. Men and women need each other.

2. Humans were commanded by God to "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). This was to be done only through *male-female* sexual relations WITHIN marriages!

"The Bible distinguishes between holy and unholy sex. Holy sex is that which takes place between a husband and wife in fulfillment of their marital relationship. Unholy sex is everything else" (*The Ten Commandments* by Dr. Laura Schlessinger and Rabbi Stewart Vogel, 1998, p. 216).

3. Marriage created a stable environment in which to raise healthy children. Marriages are the building blocks of a healthy society.

4. Marriage pictures our relationship with God. In the Old Testament, God married the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, we read that Christ will marry the church.

God gave the seventh commandment to *protect the sanctity of marriage*: "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14).

"Almighty God gave this commandment to protect the honor and sanctity of marriage. Immediately after the sixth command which declares the sacredness of human life, God gives this law to safeguard the *highest earthly relationship*. For marriage and the home is the basis of all decent soci-

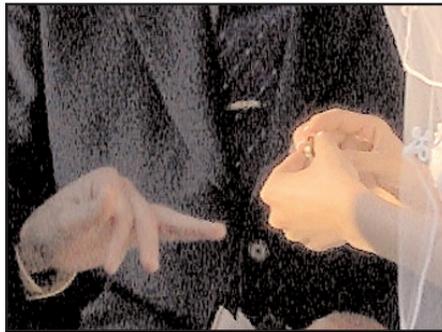


photo by Gregory Dullum

ety" (*The Ten Commandments* by Roderick C. Meredith, 1968, p. 102).

When we marry, we say wedding vows and make a covenant before God. Our wedding rings are a symbol of our commitment to remain faithful to the vows we made to our mates before God. Committing adultery is breaking those vows.

ety" (*The Ten Commandments* by Roderick C. Meredith, 1968, p. 102).

What is "adultery"? The dictionary defines it as: "Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a partner other than the lawful spouse" ("Adultery," *American Heritage Dictionary*, p. 25).

Sex Should Be Within Marriage

God wants us to ENJOY sex *within marriage*, not outside of it.

"God created sex. It was His idea. Contrary to some long-held opinions, He wants us to enjoy an abundantly pleasurable and stable sexual relationship within marriage. In that context, our sexuality endows us with the capacity to convey our appreciation, tenderness, devotion and love to our mate. It can add immeasurably to our sense of well-being and contentment" (*The Ten Commandments* by the United Church of God, 1998, p. 49).

God inspired Solomon to write about marital faithfulness using the analogy of drinking water: "Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be only your own, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountains be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love. For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, and be embraced in the arms of a seductress?" (Prov. 5:15-21).

Sexual intercourse was intended by God to be MORE than a *physical act* between TWO STRANGERS. It was intended to be *part of the marriage relationship* that *strengthens the bond* between a HUSBAND and WIFE.

"Of all the impulses and human drives of man, sex is probably the most powerful and difficult to manage. Since sex is 'natural,' why should the human animal attempt to control its expression?..."

"We often use the phrase 'he *knew* her in the biblical sense' to refer to a couple who has engaged in sexual relations. We first find this expression when 'Adam knew his wife' (Genesis 4:1), and later when Rebecca who was described as 'fair to look on, a virgin, and no man had known her' (Genesis 24:16). Sex can only occur as a sacred act when two people really know each other. It implies a mutual understanding between the two people that their sexual union is part of a sacred relationship. When two people do not share this understanding, they estrange themselves spiritually from one another and from God. One-night stands and couples who profess a purely physical relationship deny the sanctity of sex and diminish their relationship through such activity...."

"When two humans, made in the image of God, share sexual intimacy, it should have meaning, not simply to fulfill the animal urges. Animals do not have sexual relations, they engage in instinctual procreation. Humans, on the other hand, can feel satisfaction or shame from the same act, depending on its context and their partner" (Schlessinger and Vogel, pp. 214-215).

Sex Outside of Marriage

When a person takes the sexual act that was intended to be used ONLY *within marriage* and extends it to others outside the marriage, it harms the violator.

Solomon warned young men, "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life to keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids. For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared? So is he who goes into his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent... Whoever com-

mits adultery with a woman lacks understanding. He who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get, and his reproach will not be wiped away” (Prov. 6:23-29, 32-33).

Solomon further warned about extra-marital sex, “With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, with her flattering lips she seduced him. Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, he did not know it would take his life.... Her house is the way to to hell, descending to the chambers of death” (Prov. 7:21-23, 27).

The Apostle Paul warned, “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body” (1 Cor. 6:18).

People do NOT have to be *married* to break the seventh commandment!

PREMARITAL sex can be *a form of adultery* since it *affects* FUTURE marital relationships! For example, in ancient Israel, if a man thought he married a virgin, and learned after the wedding that she was not, he could have her stoned (Deut. 22:13-14, 20-21).

“The words of the command directly forbid adultery as violating the sacred rights of the marriage relation. Its spirit makes evident the fact that all unchaste conduct before marriage is a wrong done to the future marriage; and unfaithfulness before marriage is violating the command as much as adultery after marriage” (Meredith, p. 102).

It’s also possible for DIVORCED people to commit adultery! Jesus Christ said: “But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery” (Mat. 5:32). Jesus’ instructions go for both men and women: “So He said to them, ‘Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.’” (Mark 10:11-12).

(This is not mentioned as an all-encompassing statement about divorce and remarriage but is simply an example to show divorced people can commit adultery.)

Adultery Without Sex

It’s also possible to commit adultery WITHOUT HAVING SEX. It can be committed *in the mind!*

Jesus Christ magnified this commandment when He said, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that

whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mat. 5:27-28).

It is adultery to lust after someone who is in the flesh. It also is adultery to lust after images that are on paper, film or on the Internet. Viewing pornography can be another form of committing adultery!

Satan wants to destroy marriage and family, so he has made sure an adulterous attitude and sexual temptation is *everywhere*.

“More than most people even begin to realize, the sordid emphasis on sex in our modern society is terribly wrong!....

“Throughout the newspapers, magazines, billboards and TV advertisements, sex is emphasized over and over again in varying ways” (Meredith, pp. 109, 111).

“There is no question that our culture glamorizes, defends, and even promotes adultery. As Katie Roiphe described in an illuminating article in the *New York Times Magazine* (October 12, 1997), ‘...we’ve grown much more tolerant of adultery, at least when it comes to women. Women’s magazines practically recommend it to their readers as a fun and healthy activity, like buying a new shade of lipstick or vacationing in the Caribbean.’” (Schlessinger and Vogel, p. 212).

Why Adultery Is Wrong

Society is *unwilling* to CONDEMN adultery. And yet *God does!* Why? What’s WRONG with it?

1. We make ourselves impure when we violate the marriage covenant. “With parents, *honor* is divinely mandated (the Fifth Commandment) through specific actions. No such commandment is directed toward a spouse. With the Seventh Commandment, a specific rule is set up to honor the institution of marriage. Adultery comes from the term *adulterate*, which means to contaminate or make impure. We make ourselves impure... when we violate the promises of marriage: ‘You shall not lie carnally with your neighbor’s wife, to contaminate yourself with her’ (Leviticus 18:20)” (Schlessinger and Vogel, p. 221).

2. Adultery is a violation of wedding vows. The words in wedding vows may vary from ceremony to ceremony, but usually there is a promise to love, honor, and be to be faithful to each other until death. These vows are made before God,

ADULTERY

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Know Your Bible Answers

1) 30. 2) Make a bronze serpent on a pole. 3) Eleazar his son. 4) Balaam. 5) To the high priest.

Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The Talmud says: “Love your wife as much as yourself, but honor her more than yourself.”

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings. Here is this month’s selection:

Let’s Roll! by Lisa Beamer, Tyndale House, 2002, p. 123).

Small Things First

“As our boys grew, so did Todd’s career at Oracle. He began developing his own list of accounts—at first less-profitable ones, those the senior reps didn’t want. But Todd didn’t mind. He knew he could learn a lot by working on small deals, and he’d need all that experience later to meet his goals of closing the big ones. As he worked his way up the company ladder, Todd pursued higher-profile accounts—those requiring harder work to secure and greater expertise to handle but representing richer opportunities, both creatively and financially. Eventually he whittled down his client roster to half a dozen or so extremely high-profile, high-maintenance clients.”

Zech. 4:10, Luke 16:10-12, 19:17

Quotable Quotes

“Truth is forever absolute, but opinion is truth filtered through the moods, the blood, the disposition of the spectator.” —Wendell Phillips

Memory Scripture

“But this I say: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” —2 Cor. 9:6

Adultery

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and that is a serious matter! “When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you” (Deut. 23:21).

“When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed. It is better not to vow than to vow and not pay” (Eccles. 5:4-5). It is better to stay single and not break a wedding vow, than to marry and break that vow!

3. Adultery is a form of theft. The outside adulterer steals the affection of one spouse from the other, depriving spouse and family of the attention they deserve.

4. “Adultery affects the stability of the family, undermining the trust of the husband and wife and threatening the integrity of the family unit” (Schlessinger and Vogel, p. 222).

5. Children born from an adulterous relationship have a difficult time honoring their parents—they may not even know their father—thus causing them to violate the fifth commandment.

6. An adulterer “destroys his own soul” (Prov. 6:22). The character of an adulterer becomes warped and perverted.

7. Adultery cuts us off from God. When we sin, it harms our relationship with God. “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-3).

8. Adultery is a form of “sexual immorality” that will keep us out of the kingdom of God (Rev. 22:14-15). It is one of the sins that will cast us into the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8).

Adulterers Can Repent

If we have committed adultery in the past, we can repent, as did Christians in Corinth. “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor evil doers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Yes, adulterers can accept Christ’s sacrifice and *overcome* their sin! Then their future will be bright: “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he will be My son” (Rev. 21:7).



10 Commandments Monument Must Go

“A Ten Commandments monument on the Oklahoma Capitol grounds is a religious symbol and must be removed because it violates the state’s constitutional ban on using public property to benefit a religion, the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled Tuesday [June 30]....

“Since the original monument was erected in 2012, several other groups have asked to put up their own monuments on the Capitol grounds. Among them is a group that wants to erect a 7-foot-tall statue that depicts Satan as Baphomet, a goat-headed figure with horns, wings and a long beard. A Hindu leader in Nevada, an animal rights group, and the satirical Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster also have made requests” (Okla. court: Ten Commandments monument must come down” by Sean Murphy, *Southeast Mis-sour-tian*, July 1, 2015, p. 7A).

We may think idolatry is something people did long ago, and doesn’t happen today. However, if given the opportunity, there are groups who would erect statues to false gods, such as spaghetti monster—and even to Satan himself!

The more our nation turns its back on God, the sooner our destruction will come (Deut. 28:15, 36-41)!

Greek Crisis Shows Germany’s Harsh Face

“By taking what sounded to many as an aggressive, punishing, contemptuous tone toward Greece... Germany displayed its national interest more nakedly than in the past and made it clear there are limits to its willingness to put European unity first.

“The German Parliament assented on Friday [July 17], with a bit of grumbling, to negotiations on another large bailout for Greece. But Chancellor Angela Merkel and her finance minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, have appeared as unenthusiastic about the deal as the Greeks.

“Mr. Schäuble, after helping to negotiate a deal expressly intended to keep

Greece in the eurozone, has suggested several times that Greece would be better off leaving. He has come to represent, in many eyes, the hidden face of German power. In Greece, he is portrayed as a Nazi. Even an Italian weekly, *L’Espresso*, showed him on the cover with the headline, ‘This man scares us, too.’

“It may be too soon to say for sure whether the harsher German tone signifies a turning point in its role within Europe of if it is the transitory result of circumstances. But for many in Europe, especially on the center left, the Greek crisis ‘revealed a more brutal Germany, embodied in Schäuble,’ said Hans Kundnani, the author of *The Paradox of German Power*.

“‘But we see, with this crisis, a qualitative transformation of the European Union into a more coercive bloc, different from the one the founding fathers had in mind, or even the creators of the single currency,’ he said. ‘And Germany is at the heart of that.’

“The fight over Greece, Mr. Kundnani said, ‘took these developments to a new level—a more German Europe and a more coercive E.U.’” (“Germany Risks Its Reputation With Idea of Greece Exiting Eurozone” by Steven Erlanger, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, July 17, 2015, pp. 1-2).

Germany, the modern-day Assyrians, will be used by God to punish modern-day Israel—the U.S. and British Commonwealth nations (Isa. 10:5-7). A final revival of the Holy Roman Empire is coming (the last one was under Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini). This time, it will consist of a German-led European union of “10 kings” (Dan. 2:40-44, Rev. 17:10, 12-14). Christ will overthrow these 10 kings when He returns and establishes his government of PEACE!

Violence Increases

Recent attacks by one gunman who killed nine blacks in a Charleston, S. C. church and another who killed two people (and injured nine) before killing himself in a Lafayette, La., movie theater are examples of living in the violent last days (Mat. 24:12, 2 Tim. 3:1-3, Mat. 24:37, Gen. 6:5, 13).