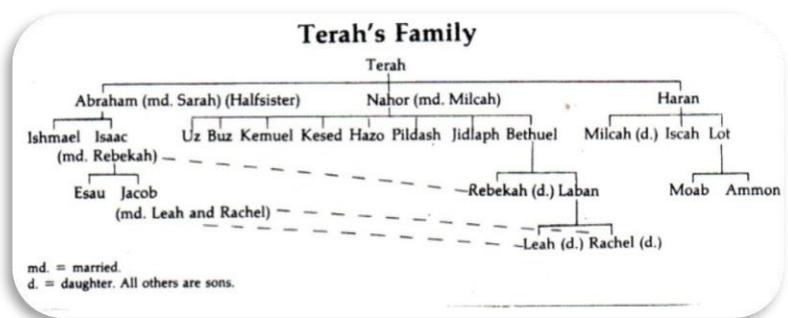


Ω THE OMEGA CODE – 20 Part Series

SESSION 6 – JUDGEMENT AT SODOM

The Genesis account of judgement would not be complete without an understanding of the call of Abram. After the dispersion and the formation of nations that were scattered across the face of the ancient world, the focus of the narrative is on the important call of Abram as the father of a unique people from which the nation of Israel would come. We have already read about the son of Peleg, so named because the earth was divided. The table then turns to trace the tribes from Peleg who lived in the Arabian Peninsula. Israel would find ancient blood ties with these desert tribes, known as the Joktanites. As all the races descended from Noah there is special mention of the lineage of Shem because from him would descend the mighty nation of Israel. Abram lived in the area of modern day Iraq known as the land of Ur. Abram's father's name was Terah. Terah and his family moved to an area called Haran. It's unlikely that Haran is the ancient area of what we now call Iran, however, this similarity of the name is interesting. Abram left his father and continued to move onto Canaan, a land that God had promised him. Terah's story in Genesis is completed when Abram finally has a son. In this narrative the direction of the book changes as it records how God called Abram out of a pagan world and made astounding promises to him that later became part of what we call the Abrahamic Covenant. The passages in Genesis 12:1-9 explains the prosperity of Abram. As part of God's covenant promise God includes part of His name "Yahweh" and blends it into Abram's new name which becomes Abraham. He becomes the epitome of faith – Romans 4:1-3, Galatians 3:6-9, Hebrews 11:8-19. There not many nations on the globe that can trace their origin to a man like Israel, however the Arab tribes also claim Abraham as their father. Abraham's wife Sarah, initially called Sarai, is also blessed with part of the name of God attached to her new identity.



For discussion:

1. **Who was Lot?**

Lot was the of Abram. See Genesis 11:31.

2. **Who was Sarah?**

Sarah was the wife of Abram but she was also his

See Genesis 20:11-12.

God has promised Abraham that he would be father of many nations, yet his wife Sarah could not bear him a son. We now have the servant woman Hagar, an Egyptian who becomes a surrogate mother to carry the seed of Abraham. Note that this was a departure

from God's plan for Abraham. Hagar gave birth to a son Ishmael who becomes the father of the Arabian tribes. Sarah and Abraham are visited by three messengers and they are told that Sarah will give birth to a son. One of the messengers spends time with the couple and the other two visit Lot who had chosen to live in the lush and green pastures along the river Jordan called Sodom and Gomorrah. The account is given in Genesis 19. Please note that the term "angel" in the Greek is "angelos" which means "messenger". The two messengers who visit Lot and his family are treated with hostility by the citizens of that notorious region. We now enter a field that has so many landmines in terms of controversy that one is loathe to embark upon discussing the sins of Sodom. The narrative makes it clear that the men of Sodom were not reacting out of inhospitality as only some would suggest was the sin of Sodom (liberal and critical thinkers who support the gay agenda claim that the sin of Sodom was not homosexuality but inhospitality). The passage of Scripture in Genesis 19:1-14 strongly suggests that the men of Sodom acted carnally and immorally and demanded that the visitors be handed over to them so that they could "know them". The word "know" in the Old Testament context often refers to "intimacy". Lot is incensed and offers his daughters to the men to protect the messengers, however, the angels blinded the hostile crowd (see Genesis 19:11-12). They call upon Lot and his family to leave Sodom and Gomorrah because of God's impending judgement.

THE JUDGEMENT OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

The chapter in Genesis 19 records God's judgement on a morally bankrupt Canaanite civilisation, but it also provides a severe warning against others becoming like them. It was difficult to get Lot to leave Sodom. He was a generous man and given to kindness (Genesis 19:2-3); a leader in the community. He was actually a judge as found in the expression "sitting in the gateway of the city" (Genesis 19:1 and 9 implies that he was a counsellor and advisor and judge). He was indeed a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7-8). Despite his rejection of the Sodomite lifestyle, he enjoyed the prosperity and good life of the society. He preferred making money off Sodom's citizens to staying in the hills. After the visitation of the dual messengers, Lot had to make a decision to stay or to leave. He had pitched his tent and established his dwelling in Sodom but now he was called on to hand over the controls of his good life and follow God's leading. This is an incredible analogy of modern life. We do not agree with the lifestyle of society yet we allow the opinions of society to shape our decisions and our choices.

3. The record in Genesis 19:24-25 explains the event?

"Then the Lord rained and on Sodom and Gomorrah. So He overthrew those cities."

Some Biblical geologists and scientists believe that it is possible that there was burning sulphur that erupted from the tar pits and showered down out of the heavens in flames of fire. Others believe that it is plausible that a meteorite struck the cities and destroyed

them. Genesis 19:28 describes the scene. It is significant, if in fact it was a meteorite that struck the city, that sulphur or what appeared to be salt was deposited around the region after the catastrophe. Lot's wife was hesitant in leaving and lingered too close to the city and was consumed by what appeared to be a pillar of salt.



Archaeologists have discovered that the southern part of the Dead Sea was once dry and fertile, the home of flourishing societies. Scholars have suggested that an earthquake could have caused the Dead Sea to spread southward, covering the existing cities and leaving the land barren. Thus the account of Sodom's destruction is based on an actual event. Even today visitors are amazed at the salt deposits in the area, and recall the account of Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt.

GOD'S JUSTICE

God is a just God and He demands the punishment of sin and rebellion. We can depend on the Lord to judge with equity. Read Genesis 18:25.

RIVER JORDAN

The river Jordan flows into what is known as the Dead Sea in Palestine. As has already been stated there is a high salt and sodium content in the water with large pillars of salt on the banks of the sea. Sodom and Gomorrah lies below the Dead Sea. There is no life in this unique lake of water. It is common knowledge that there are rich deposits of uranium, platinum and pot ash which is vital for nuclear energy and agricultural purposes. Could it be that this strategic piece of land will become the reason for the nations of the world wanting to occupy the territory? Israel turned a once desert area into the richest agricultural site in the region. Israel is the bread basket for many nations that envy her tenacity and strength. The day will come when the people of the world will try to annex this fertile land to feed the masses. Ezekiel 38 & 39 predicts that the nations north of Israel with allies from other regions will descend on Israel to take a "spoil" from the land - Ezekiel 38:10-16.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTION

When Jesus sent His disciples out to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, He told them that the cities that refused their message would one day have to face His judgement – Matthew 10:15.

4. What did Jesus mean when He spoke of it being "more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement"?

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THE WRATH OF GOD

5. While it is noble and pleasant to speak of God's love, it is foolish for people to dumb down the fact that God's character is one of justice for all. On the day of judgement the door of Grace will be closed and all those outside will face the wrath of a Divine and Holy God. How can a loving God judge the lost and send them to hell? (Luke 12:4-5 see Matthew 25:41)

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IMMORALITY AND PERVERSION.

Romans chapter 1 gives an overview of what happens when mankind loses focus on the true values of life. Instead of turning to God, man turns away from God and performs deplorable acts of an inhumane and beastly nature. Romans 1:18-28 describes the sin of departure from the Lord our Creator. There are issues facing us in modern society that challenges our level of tolerance and threatens our belief system. The gay community are desperately seeking acceptance. Many struggle with gender orientation that leads to depression and isolation. Closet identities are common, but as the world becomes more and more independent of God and the Bible, more people will come out of the closet and will unashamedly promote their status. The church has to be very sensitive in how it deals with this growing trend. It would be wrong for us to have a blanket condemnation of those who struggle with this orientation. On the one hand we have a responsibility to the truth of Scripture and on the other hand we are moved with compassion for those who seem to be in a helpless situation trapped so to speak, in a body that makes them feel uncomfortable. There are many reasons for this phenomenon and we would be insensitive to tar all gay people with the same brush, however we cannot compromise and promote a perversion as God ordained. Some stories are heart wrenching and tragic. We, as Christians, are challenged to demonstrate the truth in love. There are many heterosexuals who are as guilty of immorality as those who we consider to be perverts. We accept the sins of others but reject a lifestyle that is contrary to ours. We are called to minister with the knowledge that God accepts the response of individuals to His call of repentance and holy living. As a church we are opposed to these alternative lifestyles but we love those who are caught in the web of Satan who have become victims of a sordid and sick society. May God help us to be caring, hospitable, loving and kind to those who struggle with the demons of life. We may hate the sin but must love the sinner.