

What did Yeshua (Jesus) have to say about Sodom?



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Summary: Any Bible reader knows the story of how YHVH eradicated the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and other nearby cities, for their evil ways. The primary sin depicted in Genesis 19 is sodomy. But the parallel description in Ezekiel 16: states other sins – like their pride, their not caring for the poor and more. **But what ELSE do we know – from the very lips of our Savior? What did he say about his attitude towards the ancient inhabitants of Sodom compared to the God-believing people of his day? You might be surprised.**

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A new friend asked me what to say to his gay friends who are being called by God when they ask if they as well as others being called, can be part of the new creation in Christ (**2 Cor. 5:17**). He himself is not gay, and neither am I. But what do we say to them? Are they welcome into the body of Christ or not? This is assuming they are seeking God, repenting of their sins and accepting Yeshua as their Savior. What would you say?

Let me add another case, this one is not in the blog. In the job I had in the Northwest USA, I made an appointment with a restaurant owner. Somehow – I don't remember how now – he confided with me that he once sought to become a catholic priest, but for various reasons it hadn't worked out. As we proceeded, I could give a discount if he was married or had a partner in a committed relationship – whether married or not. He said he wasn't married, but he was in a committed relationship, and so he brought out his partner – who was another man. They were gays.

So the gay restaurant owner said, "OK, so I get a discount, right? But since you said you read the Bible, you probably despise me now, right?"

I replied, "No sir, not at all."

He continued, "But the Bible – and therefore God and his people – despise us gays, and therefore you surely do as well." I shook my head and asked him if

he had a Bible in the back, and he did. It was at that point that I began to share with him the gospel of peace (**Ephesians 6:15**) and the gospel of grace (**Acts 20:24**) – and of course the gospel of the kingdom of God: that we all need a Savior and God wants everyone to be saved, yes including me, including you, including him and his gay friends, and all who have sinned.

I also talked with him about the gospel of the glory of Christ (**2 Corinthians 4:4**) and what Yeshua had to say about gays.

Slowly I saw his angry and anxious demeanor change.

Some of what we talked about is what this message is all about. In his case, I especially showed him scriptures in Matthew 10 and 11, which we'll get to, where Christ was basically telling the people of the towns in which he preached – that ancient Sodom was better than they were. He got excited about that, and marked his Bible well in those passages. We'll get to those in this teaching today.

My friend who called the other day knows, and we all know, that a practicing adulterer, liar, thief, extortioner, homosexual, covetous man, idolater, etc. etc. will not inherit the kingdom of God (**1 Cor. 6:9-11**). I will read that fully a bit later. But God IS calling sinners from all backgrounds, including gay men and women. What does scripture say to them? Did Yeshua have anything to say about the way HE saw Sodom? Well, yes, he certainly had something to say and we'll get there. This is my encouraging answer.

CATEGORIZING LEVELS of how BAD sins are compared to others

Let's review some core beliefs:

- **We ALL have sinned and fallen short** of the glory of God (**Romans 3:23**). Agreed? In the Old Testament, there were some sins that incurred restitution – like for theft. In the OT, those did not incur the death penalty. But spiritually, “all have sinned” and “the wages of sin is death” (**Romans 6:33**). So your little sins and my big sins all, and each, incurred the death penalty, no matter how bad or how slight you think yours were. You and I had to accept the Savior's life for our sins or we would burn up in hell fire someday. Are we on the same page so far? Paul said Christ “died for ME” (**Gal. 2:20**).

Another way of saying it: For whom did Christ die? What's your answer? Romans 5:6 says clearly “...Christ died for the

UNGODLY". Including you before you were forgiven. Including me. Including gays. Including murderers, rapists and those who steal from their office supplies.

So we're ALL death-penalty-deserving sinners whom God forgives when we repent. Can we all agree on that? It doesn't matter if you're gay or straight, a murderer or someone who "just" hates someone, or if you're an adulterer in deed or just in your heart – you made Christ have to die for you. Period.

- **SIN IS SIN, DESERVING THE DEATH PENALTY (Romans 6:33).**

But WE like to categorize sinners and levels of sin into

- 'not so bad – a sinner like me,
- much worse than me,
- unforgivably bad,
- So bad he/she should be banned from others for forever and ever and probably should rot in hell, as people would say. That's very bad.

So we can end up feeling some people with sins in the last 2 categories we set up should never ever be allowed in church fellowship and the harshest among us would say they probably never should have been born. Yes, I know a scripture or two which say something like that, but read it in context.

But sin is sin. The wages of sin is death. The fact YOU don't have to die now is immaterial to the point being made. Sin causes Death. Your sin caused the death of the son of God for you. A gay man or woman's sin also incurs either their death – or the death of Christ – if they accept his offer. Yes, even for them.

Categorizing sins into horrible sins and "acceptable sins" is so "holier-than-thou" and is so wrong. That is so un-Christ-like. Let's look into this. We can all easily end up a bit like the Pharisee who stood praying how grateful he was that he was not as bad as other people. Be honest now: most of us at some time in our lives have thought we're not as bad as someone else. Right?

Luke 18:9-14

"Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, **one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.** 11 The

Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You **that I AM NOT LIKE other men** — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, '**God, be merciful to me a sinner!**' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Yep, you've thought those thoughts; I've thought those thoughts, forgetting we all need the same forgiveness. *And all too many of us want nothing to do with someone who has issues going on that we hate.* So we might not want to be seen with repentant or repenting sinners who were hooked on porn, or who have tattoos all over their body, or who had been practicing homosexuals, or people who had committed serial adulteries. No, those are not our friends as a rule of thumb. Too bad. Not Christ like, as we shall see. But WE like to be seen with "acceptable" people.

You know what? The older I get, the more I realize that so many of even the respected great elites of our world and of society, have been in the lowest gutter of depravity in so many cases. Great leaders have been discovered in faithless liaisons, adultery, debauchery and the like. Even our early presidents – and more – were unfaithful, and caused babies from their slave girls. So don't tell me they're better than the rest of us, the non-elites. There was a ton of illicit sex and rapes going on, inflicted on the slaves, for example. Let's just admit it.

- **But anyone – no matter their past sins, including sinful elites and including whoever you feel is the worst of humanity – anyone, if they've repented and are seeking God, can be a child of God as part of his NEW CREATION.** This includes adulterers, murderers, the self-righteous, thieves -- and even gays God is calling. And yes, I know for a fact, God IS calling gays just like he's calling other sinners.

WHO CAN BE IN THE FELLOWSHIP

So when can a person with a particularly horrid sinful past be part of our fellowship and when must they be kept out?

Turn to 1 Corinthians 5, then 2 Cor. 2.

There was a Corinthian man who had done some highly immoral things so bad that it could barely be described – and he was thrown out of the fellowship (see **1 Corinthians 5**).

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles — that a man has his father's wife! 2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

(The end of verse 5 is very interesting. It says put him out, even if his flesh is destroyed, that “his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

So this man was disfellowshipped. “Finally”, some must have been thinking. And apparently the Corinthians were in no hurry to let him back in. After all, he had disgraced the Body. *But so had many others* with all their sins listed in the whole book – those suing one another, those of party spirits, those involved in their chaotic and drunken Passover services, those involved in chaotic “speaking in tongues” without interpreters or order; those preaching the resurrection was past and it’s all over now, etc. etc.

So later on Paul ordered the brethren to welcome him back in upon his repentance (2 Cor. 2). I’m sure there were some there hoping they’d never have to see him again. Some could have argued he was too dangerous to allow back. What a cop out. Paul said – extend your love to him, welcome him back, lest Satan take advantage of the situation and lest he suffer too much now.

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

“But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent — not to be too severe. 6 This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, 7 **so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.** 8 **Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.**

9 For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, **11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."**

So once someone has repented and come to Christ, we should be welcoming those people into the fellowship. God calls people from all backgrounds. Yes he does. And yet some of you wouldn't be caught dead near a gay man or woman in the world or even one being called by God.

What about Yeshua? Could he have had friends who were gay who were being called into relationship with God Almighty? Could he? And what did Yeshua (Jesus) have to say about Sodom?

ALL sin, no matter how bad, can we WASHED AWAY

IN spite of how bad any and all of us were in the past, when we acknowledge and repent of all our sins, and then accept Yeshua as our Savior, then get immersed in water baptism into the name and body of Christ, and then have hands laid on us to receive God's holy spirit – **we become new creations of God.** This is the pattern Peter preached on Pentecost in Acts 2:38.

ALL sin, no matter how bad it was, no matter how many people it hurt and devastated – and yes, sin can do that –ALL SIN can be washed away in the blood of the Christ.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness."

"ALL" means ALL! There is no sin, no past, greater than the cleansing power of the blood of the Son of God, shed for you, shed for all humanity who will accept him. So don't refuse your love and acceptance to someone just because you heard they were such a horrible sinner in the past.

The change has to be real. The repentance has to be proven by fruit of a new life. And this results in us fellowshiping with one another – whether straight or formerly actively gay, whether adulterer or gossip or whatever.

1 John 1:6-7

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from ALL sin.**”

When someone repents, even as they will continue to struggle with totally eradicating that old way of life, **we need to view them the way God sees them: as a new creation.** How can that be?

Look at yourself. Even YOU – though you’ve repented of your old sins, some of them you still commit from time to time, don’t you? We all do. Don’t kid yourself unless you think you’re better than the Apostle Paul! I said the change has to be real – but even then, it takes TIME to totally eradicate all sin in our lives. How well I know that too.

Yes, even YOU still covet sometimes. You still sometimes are sloppy on how you keep – or break – the holy sabbath. You and I still over eat at times, gluttony. You’ve repented of your porn habit, but – once in a while you still sink into that sloppy pit! You’ve repented of your drinking, your alcoholism, but all too often you still drink more than you should. Gossip – yep that too. Many still engage in that. And yes, some of you still find yourselves lusting after that luscious babe over there, right? I say it that way to make my point.

“Respectable sins”?

The problem is this: we aren’t honest with ourselves as we excuse our own failings. OUR sins, we subconsciously think to ourselves, are “respectable sins” – as one author put it. But a gay man fighting his inclinations doesn’t comport to our thinking, so too many condemn him. Neither are we very compassionate with drunks, drug addicts or any category we don’t respect. Maybe we lack compassion on people on welfare and social programs. One of the things God judged ancient Judah for was their lack of compassion and help to the poor (Ezekiel 16:50). Actually God likens it perhaps to the list of other sins Sodom was less known for: idleness, greed, not helping the poor, etc. Read **in Ezekiel 16:49-50.**

So when will we be able to actually see – and say – that we are now “perfect” – without spot of any sin, not even a smidgen?

WHEN PERFECTION IS FINALLY ACCOMPLISHED

God sees the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Therefore Yehovah already sees his FINISHED work in you through the life of Christ now living in you.

Even Paul the apostle said, years after his conversion, that he still sometimes did those things he hated!

Romans 7:15-20

“For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but **what I hate, that I do**. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; **for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.** 19 **For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.** 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.”

If Paul can admit that, can YOU? I'm bringing this up because some of you won't accept someone if you fear they might slip back once in a while in their old sins. But don't you, once in a while, slip back – and lose your temper, lose your patience, or use some profanity, or lust, or break the sabbath? Don't you? Be honest with yourself! Even Paul said he did! You're not better than Paul!

But Paul doesn't leave it there but goes on to say how thru Christ he will have the victory (Romans 7:24; 8:1-6 – please read these).

As far as we still fall sometimes, scripture reminds us that when it's all said and done –

- our corruptible flesh will put on incorruptible spirit (**1 Cor. 15:50-53**).
- He sees us as a Bride without spot or wrinkle or blemish– if we abide in him (**Eph 5:25-27**)
- Jude says when we are presented to God, we shall be faultless (**Jude 24**).

Are you there now? No, we're like Paul who sometimes still do those things we hate. I know NOBODY alive today who is truly faultless. Nobody. Especially since we can't read the heart and thoughts of each person.

So if you see a brother still falling back into an old sin, realize that you do that too – in your particular weaknesses. Leave the judging to God. Go back and read **Romans 14** where this is clearly spelled out? “Who are YOU to judge

your brother, for whom Christ died? Before his master he will stand, and his master is able to make him stand.” Yes, go read it for yourself.

“NEW CREATION” – DON’T THINK OF YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER in the old way, the way they used to be

With Paul’s own example, even before we are perfect, in Christ we are seen as his new creation, as Father sees our ending – years and years from now – and not just the way we are now. When we are changed, we are made perfect, flawless, without fault. So He who sees the end from the beginning calls us HIS New Creation.

2 Corinthians 5:16-19

“Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. **18 Now all things are of God,** who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, **19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”**

This new Creation can apply to ex-drunks, drug addicts, adulterers, liars, homosexuals, thieves and any sinner. YOU and I have to believe that about ourselves and others.

But you think – “once you’re an alcoholic, you’re always one”. Once gay, that’s it – always one – some say.

Folks, **do not deny the power of God’s Spirit to radically change anyone from any sinful behavior or past.** Including you. Including me. Don’t be disbelieving.

Folks, one more thing: there is ONE Creator. HE is the Creator of new me and the new you being NEW creations. We are not self-made. **This is not Do-It-Yourself salvation.** You are not your own creator of the New Creation and neither are you your own Savior! *Neither do we evolve over time to be perfect.* This is HIS work, not mine. And when a struggling sinner repents and accepts Yeshua and his Spirit – he becomes a new creation. Not perfect yet.

I'm not yet what I'm going to be. I'm not yet what I want to be or strive to be. But I'm sure not what I once was. Praise Yeshua, the Messiah, my Lord, my King, my Savior and my Redeemer.

I DO believe that more of us could see dramatic changes if we would surrender fully to our new King Yeshua. If we would seek him daily, many times a day, as if our lives depended on it. I know people who say when they really fully surrendered, the urges to the old bad habits just disappeared – be it drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, illicit sex, porn or any way of thinking and being.

I do believe that is possible and more of us would see that if we would fully surrender. I preach to myself too.

Every creation in Christ should understand that of ourselves – and of one another – and show patience, forgiveness and acceptance of one another. Sure, if the sins become egregious enough, the sinner has to be kicked out of the fellowship. HAS to be. But you don't kick someone out for accusations that are decades old!! That's completely contrary to 2 Cor. 2.

And we need to apply this to drunks who are overcoming, to gays who put away that old way of life, drug addicts and anyone addicted to any sin. YOU are fighting your own addictions to your hot temper, obesity, impatience, "little" lies and thefts... and in the end, you will be flawless when God turns you into spirit. But the WAY OF LIFE you once lived has to be condemned by you, rejected by you, and a titanic struggle should be exerted against going back!

And the biggest hard work we should put in – is to be close, stay close, seek Yeshua and be attached to him like a branch is to a vine! (**John 15:1-5**). If you do, you will be presented faultless before his Presence (**Jude 24**). Focus on Jesus – and you will become more and more like him. That's what **2 Cor. 3:18** says! Please read it.

You do not overcome sin by focusing and stewing about your sin. Paul said the more he thought about "Do not covet", the more he wanted to covet! So Paul teaches us to keep our eyes on Yeshua/Jesus and something wondrous happens.

But that doesn't mean you're not a new creation anymore when you sin. (I hope you'll hear my sermon on New Creation by the way.) The perfect, sinless, faultless you (**see Jude 24**) will appear when you are resurrected or changed to spirit at the last trump and your corruptible puts on incorruptible (**1 Cor.**

15:50-53; Ephesians 5:37). Christ sees his imperfect Bride as “without spot or wrinkle”.

Folks, I'm laying the groundwork that these statements in scripture are to every single one who is in Christ and a new creation. Everyone. No matter what their sinful, wicked or aberrant past was.

Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5:16** that we should not even think of anyone the way they were before they fully repented. Then v 17 – “if ANYONE is in Christ, he is a new creation...”

“Anyone” must include “straight” people who have lied, cheated and committed adultery - - and, yes, this new creation must also be true of gay people or homosexuals who also repent of their sins. Sin is sin. Sin is the breaking of God's law (1 John 3:4) – no matter your color, no matter the type of sins you've engaged in.

And this includes anyone with any kind of sin they are struggling to overcome. This includes liars, thieves (no matter how small the theft is), sabbath breakers, gossips, obese gluttons, covetous men and women – and yes, it must include gay people whom God is calling into a close relationship with Him in Christ. Yes, including gays.

HOW YESHUA THE Messiah TREATED SINFUL PEOPLE

But humanity likes to feel better about some sins than others. So this blog today is this: **What did Jesus have to say about Sodom?** Can repentant sinful gay people come to Yeshua (Jesus) in deep heart-felt repentance and be a friend of the Savior as much as any “straight” person who repents? And remember, we've all sinned, and the wages of any sin is death (Rom 6:33).

So – perhaps shocking to some of you – if a homosexual repents and is baptized and seeks his God, guess what? God welcomes him joyfully into His arms as much as He welcomed you and me into his arms with our sins that we had to repent of. Yes, God is calling people of all types, from all sin backgrounds, including you, including me, including gays. Everyone has the potential of being called and chosen by our great God and become new creations in Christ. Hallelujah. Everyone. Anyone. And I'll say it again: even gays.

Now don't misunderstand. If you have been committing adultery, you gotta stop and repent. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** is very clear about that. You and I

gotta stop committing our habitual sins or we simply won't be in the kingdom of God. Let's read it:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

“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, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 **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.”

Paul does not isolate homosexuals as somehow being in a worse category of sinners than adulterers or extortioners. We've ALL sinned, and we can all be washed and declared righteous by Christ (justified) and set apart for holy use (sanctified). Praise our God!!!

God loves everyone, and does not want a single person to perish if possible (**2 Peter 3:9**). Even while we were yet sinners he sent his Son to die for us (**Romans 5:8**). Our job is to love God and love one another and leave the judging and changing up to God. Making someone NEW is HIS specialty and He will finish what he started in each of us.

*If my statements are shocking you, then don't forget that the religious folk of Yeshua's day were stunned by how many well-known deplorable sinner types were actually becoming Yeshua's FRIENDS. He was quite happy to be “a friend of sinners”. He enjoyed eating with sinners who came to him. He said he came to call sinners to repentance and not just to come visit the righteous (be sure to read **Matthew 9:10-13**.*

IMPORTANT: If Yeshua the Messiah lives in you, He will live the same way he did before! He doesn't change (**Hebrews 13:8**). But **WE must change** – by letting Yeshua live actively live again, this time through our bodies. If we do that, guess what? We TOO become friends of sinners, just like the Saviour. And Christ now lives through us all over the world.

What makes it hard is when “God's people” refuse fellowship and acceptance to people who have committed certain sins, even though they've repented. This includes homosexuals, drunkards, pedophiles, rapists, murderers – if they've repented and come to Christ – like you did, like

you had to – then we must accept one another in Christ, or you're rejecting the work of Christ, you're rejecting a friend of Christ, and you're rejecting a child of God – all in spite of what they had done or had been previously.

Now go back and read the whole chapter of Luke 15. In that chapter we have my most loved parables by Christ: the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son – the story of the Prodigal Son, my favorite. I see it as my story. I hope you see it as your story. And do you remember how Luke 15 BEGINS? Do you? Go back in your own Bible and check it out.

Luke 15:1-2

“Then ALL the tax collectors [lying, stealing cheats!] and sinners drew near to him to hear him. And the Pharisees [religious self-righteous leaders] and scribes complained saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." 3 So He spoke this parable to them, saying....”

And then what follows are Christ's classic series of parables about the joy in heaven over lost souls coming to salvation. The lost coin, the lost sheep, the Prodigal son. My favorites.

It was in THIS judgmental context, when Christ was being derided for talking to ex-whores, ex-sinners, and he was loving that interaction – that birthed the glorious stories of the Prodigal Son and his amazing Father. THAT was the context! That Christ loves people. Yes, Yeshua is the friend of sinners who repent.

So what DID Christ have to say about Sodom?

First understand that “sodomy” was not the only sin in Sodom. We all think Sodom was destroyed because of rampant sodomy, due to the story of Genesis 19. But **keep these other facts in mind:**

Abraham in Genesis 18 actually petitioned YHVH to spare the entire city of Sodom if 10 righteous people could be found in it. Did you get that? Abraham, in effect, was praying for Sodom! Sure, I know, he really was hoping Lot and his family would be spared, but that's not what he asked for. He asked for SODOM to be spared, if there were 10 righteous in it. Abraham was not a part of Sodom, did not live in it, but he still cared for them.

In fact in Genesis 14, when Sodom was captured by enemy kings and they took the people hostage, Abraham and his men did not only save Lot and his family, but many people of Sodom. Abraham was used by God in Genesis 14 to save many people of Sodom alive for a time. Now I'm certain many of them still had horrible sins, but Abraham prayed for them and saved many of them alive.

When GOD LISTS the sins of Sodom that caused their destruction, sodomy is not even mentioned in the list! In Ezekiel 16, YHVH (God) likens the kingdom of Judah to ancient Sodom. Elsewhere in this chapter He even says Judah became worse than Sodom. Perhaps he's really talking about Judah, but it appears he's equating Judah to Sodom.

Ezekiel 16:49-50 – “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 poor and needy. 50 And they were **haughty** and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.”

Having said all that, please don't misunderstand me. Sodom was blasted out of existence for a series of despicable sins they were committing. In fact the evil final last days of this world's way is likened to the time of “the days of Noah” and “the time of Lot”. (**Luke 17:28-30**). Even in that context, Christ lists a bunch of ordinary activity going on – eating, drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.

Luke 17:28-30

“Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”

So besides that verse, what else did Jesus Himself actually SAY about Sodom? He said the people of his day, the cities of Capernaum and others were in for more severe judgment during the Day of Judgment than the people of Sodom would be in the Judgment! He uses the term “more tolerable” time of judgment for Sodom compared to the sabbath keepers of his day. Got it?

Matthew 11:23-24

“And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done

in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that **it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you.**"

Any of you who have gay friends whom God may be calling, please understand that a more tolerable time is coming for the city of Sodom in the resurrection than the people of Yeshua's day! And help them see that God loves all of us who repent. We DO have to repent. We do have to change. We do have to walk a different path with God's spirit guiding the way.

And yes, God is calling liars, adulterers, sabbath breakers, sodomites, cheaters, gossips, gluttons and self-righteous people – who, when they come face to face with their calling and come to “see” God as Job did, will repent and change. You see, God truly wants everyone to come to salvation and to inherit glory.

Yeshua our Saviour went on to say that even those cities that refuse to let Christ's followers work in those cities, will have a tougher future in the coming judgment than Sodom. Read **Matthew 10:14-15** on your own.

So there's a “more tolerable” time coming for ancient Sodom than for the synagogue-attending people of Christ's day who rejected him.

I have a confession to make. I used to despise gay people and other types of sinners many years ago. But as I came to see them as people made in God's image as much as anyone else is made in God's image, I began to feel God's love and compassion on them, and on all people who respond to Him. I now have several real friends and work acquaintances who are gay, and I can enjoy time with them as much as I can enjoy time with a carpenter who breaks the sabbath, or someone who mows lawns who cheats on his wife. I hate what they do of course. I hate what I do at times too when I'm not abiding in Christ. But we can love the people. We must love people and accept ALL sinners who repent as members of the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 Explained

What about **1 Cor. 5:9-13** that says not to even eat with such sinners? Folks, go back and read that passage again carefully and in context. First of all, Paul clearly states that we can fellowship with sinners of the world. But he's explaining we are not to associate with a brother or sister who IS continuing to live a LIFE of ongoing sexual immorality or other sins as a way of life. He is NOT referring to brethren who USED TO do certain sins but have since repented and stopped those sins. His commands in 2 Corinthians 2 to bring

back the repentant awful sinner is proof of that! And he also adds at the end that he certainly is not talking about disassociating from people of the world who are far less than perfect – or we'd have to leave this world.

Now as far as brethren go, remember:

- Sin is sin. We've all sinned and became worthy of death. Rom 3:23; 6:33
- When we repent, the blood of Christ covers ALL sin, washes away all sin, no matter how bad it was 1 John 1:7, 9
- Once a person has God's spirit, he/she is now a new creation and the past is past. 2 Cor. 5:17
- We are no longer to "see" one another the way we used to be, but the way we are becoming in Christ, a new creation. 2 Cor. 5:16
- Christ was a friend of sinners who come to him – and he still is. Luke 15:1-2;
- Christ in us will help US be a friend of sinners as well. This includes ANY kind of sinner who is coming to God. They should see the love of God through our compassionate eyes and by our acceptance of them... no matter what their sins of the past have been.
- And remember, Christ himself said there is coming a "more tolerable time" even for Sodom than the cities Christ was preaching to.

Frankly folks, we need more of Paul's attitude: 1 Timothy 1:15 – "That Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." We can love Christ more and love God much more when we realize how much we've been forgiven like the woman at the end of Luke 7. God can change any sinner – whether adulterer, pedophile, homosexual, liar, thief, sabbath breaker or profane person. I know, because he has saved me.

So – any of you – if God is calling you into his body, I sure hope you accept that high calling. If He reveals to you that you have ongoing sins in your life that you must stop, that you must give up – then you and I better give them up. Right now! I had some horrendous sins in my past that I acknowledge, but they ARE PAST. And as **1 Cor.6:10-11** says – but God washed me, cleansed me, and sanctified me. And he'll do the same for you.

Perhaps it's recognizing how much we've each been forgiven (and it's a LOT, folks) that will hopefully allow us to be so happy to see sinful people of all stripes finally repent, no matter what they had done in the past. And we welcome them with open arms into the body of Christ. With open arms. With JOY. Without condemnation.

Those who see their own wretched past – now washed away – are more likely to feel the love of Christ in their own lives. Read the story of the sinner woman washing Jesus' feet in **Luke 7:36-50**. No, read it two or three times. Yeshua said she loved much, because she knew how much she herself had been forgiven. See yourself in that repentant sinner – whether she had been a whore or whatever – the Son of God accepted her.

If you can't accept repentant sinners - adulterers, liars, gays, thieves and "worse" by human estimation – coming into the Body of Christ (the church), then maybe YOU are the one who needs to wake up, see yourself, recognize how much YOU'VE been forgiven -- and YOU be willing then to love, accept, forgive, befriend, celebrate and rejoice in your new brother and sister God is working with.

If you or I can't or won't forgive and accept one another – then guess what? YOU or I will be the ones not forgiven and accepted by our God!

I know you know the scriptures, but in case you've forgotten – here they are: Matt 6:14-15;

- The merciful obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7); also Matthew 18:21-22, 35.
- Forgive even many times in one day! Mark 11:25; Luke 17:3-4;
- Forgive as Christ has forgiven us - Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13;
- Judgment is without mercy to those who have shown no mercy (James 2:13).
- We are admonished not to even grumble against each other, lest WE be condemned (James 5:9). Please take time to read all those.

Paul hated to see this holier-than-thou stuff going on in the body of Christ. He asks, "Who are you to condemn and judge a brother, for whom Christ died?" See **Romans 14:4, 10, 12**.

So – regardless your past – regardless what you currently struggle with -- if you are seeking your Messiah and our Father in heaven, if you have repented and repent each day too, if you are baptized in the name of Jesus of Nazareth and have received our Father's spirit – then welcome dear brother and sister, welcome into the body of our wonderful Messiah, Yeshua the Christ.

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