

“HEAD COUNT”

On Location, Part 1

January 3rd, 2010

“Everyone who strengthens the hand of the poor or the needy with a loaf of bread shall be burnt with fire.” a law in Sodom

Ezekiel 16:49 (NAS) “Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy.”

Sodom was a dangerous place to live, a dangerous place to visit, yet it was an extraordinarily wealthy city

Genesis 13:10 (NIV) “Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company.”

In the story of Sodom we’ll discover something very amazing about the **character** of God

Genesis 18:1-2 (NIV) “The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.”

Genesis 18:16,20-21 (NIV) “When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way...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. If not, I will know.’”

God had heard the outcry of pain & mistreatment from Sodom and was ready to **do** something about it

Genesis 18:22-23 (NIV) “The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then Abraham approached Him and said: ‘Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?’”

“Righteous” refers to a “God-**fearer**” – they believed their was a God and were doing their best to do the right thing

Genesis 18:24-25 (NIV) “[Abraham] ‘What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will You really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing – to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from You! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?’”

Genesis 18:26 (NIV) “The Lord said, ‘If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.’”

Genesis 18:27-28 (NIV) “Then Abraham spoke up again: ‘Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will You destroy the whole city because of five people?’ ‘If I find forty-five there,’ He said, ‘I will not destroy it.’”

God is not rushing to **judge**, and God is not rushing to **punish**

God is willing to overlook sinful people for a time if there are enough non-sinful or righteous people in their midst

There is a sense in which the righteous preserves the unrighteous; there is a sense in which righteousness holds off God's anger for the time being

Genesis 18:32 (NIV) "Then he said, 'May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?'"

Genesis 18:32-33 (NIV) "God answered, 'For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.' When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, He left, and Abraham returned home."

Genesis 19:12 (NIV) "The two men said to Lot, 'Do you have anyone else here – sons-in-law, sons or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that He has sent us to destroy it.'"

The implication: From God's perspective a little bit of righteousness goes a long way

God is willing to delay giving people what they deserve if righteous people are among them

As long as there is the presence of righteousness from God's perspective, there is hope for the unrighteous

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV) "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

2 Peter 3:15 (NIV) "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation,..."

God says your presence is a reminder that there is hope for those people around you

Most of us came to Christ, not because the majority we know were God followers – it was just 1

We get frustrated and shout to God, "Why don't You do something?" Perhaps God is saying, "Why don't you do something? Why do you think I left you there for?"

Matthew 5:13-14 (NIV) "[Jesus said] 'You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world.'"

From God's perspective you are the preservative for this planet. Your presence makes a difference

A little bit of righteousness goes a long, long way

My Next Step Today Is:

God, help me begin to see where You've placed me, the way You see me.

I want to participate in the "Read Through the Bible in a Year" group

I want to be in a small group beginning mid-Jan., but need help finding the right one for me.

I will memorize 2 Peter 3:9