

**SIGNIFICANT REFERENCES IN THE BIBLE (MORE THAN MERE MENTIONS)  
TO THE SODOM AND GOMORRAH STORY (GEN. 19)**

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*(Translations are from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.)*

**Genesis 19: The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah**

1. Lot takes in two strangers who are angels in disguise. 2. Hospitality was an obligation (Abraham, Gen. 18.1-7; Lot, Gen. 19.3, 8); interpreted thus by Jesus in Matt. 10.15//Luke 10.12. 3. Inhospitality of the town males: all (19.4)—not just some gays--want to gang rape Lot's guests, thus "womanizing" (and shaming) them. 4. The town males are motivated by xenophobia (19.9)—fear/hatred of outsiders (Lot is an "alien" as are the two strangers. 5. Patriarchalism: Lot offers his two virgin daughters in place of the two male visitors: gang rape of women is seen as an acceptable price of hospitality to avoid an inhospitable and shaming gang rape of males (so also in Judges 19: fatal gang rape of a concubine offered in place of a male guest). 6. Same-sex relations between equal consenting partners is not the issue in this passage.

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**Deut. 29.23:** [*Context:* If people ask why the Lord destroyed Israel, the answer will be [29.25] "because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord... [29.26] turned and served other gods... [29.27] so the anger of the Lord was kindled against that land, bringing on it every curse written in this book"—and [29.23] Israel's soil will be "burned out by sulfur and salt, nothing planted, nothing sprouting, unable to support any vegetation, like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah."] [*→The point of comparison is the devastating effect of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, with no cause for the destruction named.*]

**Deut. 32.32:** [*Context:* Deut. 32, the Song of Moses, is a "covenant lawsuit" against Israel for its unfaithfulness; 32.31-33 contrast Israel's enemies, which do not have the Lord (Rock), with Israel, which does; yet Israel doesn't see that.] "Their [the enemies'] rock is not like our Rock; our enemies are fools. 32.32: Their vine comes from the vinestock of Sodom, from the vineyards of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison; their clusters are bitter; [32.33] their wine is the poison of serpents, the cruel venom of asps." [*→Sodom and Gomorrah as bywords for wickedness stemming, it seems, from idolatry.*]

**Isa. 1.9-10:** [*Context:* lament over Judah as wicked:] 1.9: "If the Lord had not left us a few survivors, we would have become like Sodom and Gomorrah! [1.10] Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of God! [1.11] What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings, of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats." [*→Again Sodom and Gomorrah function as bywords for wickedness and destruction with no cause named; Judah's sin is thinking offering sacrifices is sufficient to please God/what God wants; unlike Sodom and Gomorrah, a remnant of Judah survived (see Rom. 9.29 below).*]

**Isa. 3.9:** [*Context:* lament over Judah as desolate and wicked:] “The look on their faces bears witness against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves.” [→*Sodom and Judah are both guilty of shameless wickedness, which is not specified.*]

**Isa. 13.19:** [*Context:* an oracle against Babylon] **13.19:** “And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pride of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them. [13.20] It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations....” [→*Sodom and Gomorrah as bywords for utter devastation; nothing said of the cause.*]

**Jer. 23.14:** [*Context:* an oracle against Judah’s prophets: 23.13: they prophesy “by Baal,” i.e., falsely] **23.14:** “But in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a more shocking thing: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from wickedness; all of them have become like Sodom to me, and its inhabitants like Gomorrah.” [→*Sodom and Gomorrah as bywords for God’s abhorrence, with no cause named; Judah’s sin is adultery, lying, and encouraging of wickedness.*]

**Jer. 49.18:** [*Context:* an oracle against Edom, predicting in 49.17 its destruction] **49.18:** “As when Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors were overthrown, says the Lord, no one shall live there, nor shall anyone settle it.... I will suddenly chase Edom away ....” [→*Sodom and Gomorrah as bywords for utter devastation with no cause named.*]

**Jer 50.40:** [*Context:* an oracle against Babylon, similar to the preceding passage] **50.40:** “As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors, says the Lord, so no one shall live there, nor shall anyone settle there.” [→*Same comparison as in preceding passage.*]

**Lam. 4.6:** [*Context:* a lament over the siege and destruction of Jerusalem] **4.6:** “For the chastisement of my people has been greater than the punishment of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment, though no hand was laid upon it.” [→*Sodom as a byword for swift, divine punishment—no cause given.*]

**Ezek 16.46-58:** [*Context:* an oracle against Jerusalem for its unfaithfulness and alliances with other peoples, who are referred to as lovers; because of these alliances and Jerusalem’s idolatry (16.35-36) God will judge Jerusalem “as women who commit adultery and shed blood” (16.38); 16.44-53 compare Jerusalem—negatively—with its older sister Samaria and its younger sister Sodom, both of whom God destroyed] **16.46:** “Your elder sister is Samaria, who lived with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you, is Sodom with her daughters.” 16.47-48: Jerusalem “followed their ways” but more so! [→] **16.49:** “This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had *pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.* 16.50: They were *haughty*, and did *abominable things* before me; therefore I removed them when I saw it.” 16.53, 55: God will restore Sodom’s and Samaria’s “fortunes” and Jerusalem’s too. **16.56:** “Was not your sister Sodom a *byword* in your mouth in the day of your *pride*, [16.57] before your wickedness was uncovered?”

**Amos 4.11:** [*Context:* an oracle against Israel for oppressing the poor (4.1) and for its futile sacrifices] **4.11:** “I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a brand snatched from the fire; yet you did not return to me, says the Lord.”

[→*Sodom and Gomorrah as a byword for destruction, with no cause given.*]

**Zeph. 2.9:** [*Context:* an oracle against Moab] Because they [2.8] “taunted my people and made boasts against their territory,” [2.9] “Therefore, as I live, says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Moab shall become like Sodom and the Ammonites like Gomorrah, a land possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a waste pit forever.” [→*Sodom and Gomorrah as a byword for utter destruction, with no cause named.*]

**Matt. 10.15:** [*Context:* sending out of the Twelve] // **Luke 10.12** [sending out of the Seventy]: [Matt. 10.14//Luke10.10-11: whatever place does not receive you, shake off its dust from your feet:] *Mt 10.15:* the land of Sodom and Gomorrah will fare better in the day of judgement than that town. *Lk 10.12:* Sodom will fare better in that day than that town. [→*The sin of the guilty towns is inhospitality.*]

**Matt. 11.23-24** [*Context:* woes on cities of Galilee for not responding to Jesus’ might works] **11.23:** If the mighty works done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, it would remain to this day. [→*Unlike Capernaum, Sodom – a byword for wickedness – would have repented had Jesus’ mighty works been done there.*] **11.24** repeats *Matt. 10.15.*

**Luke 17.29** [*Context:* the last judgement will come amidst the ordinary activities of the day-to-day] **17.28:** in Lot’s day “they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, [17.29] but on the day that Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed all of them–[17.30] it will be like that on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.” **17.31:** So don’t delay your departure [17.32] as Lot’s wife did. [→*Sodom a byword for sudden, unexpected destruction, no cause given.*]

**Rom. 9.29** [*Context:* only a remnant of Israel will be saved] → **9.29** then quotes **Isa. 1.9** (see above) in support of this view.

**2 Pet 2.10** [*Context:* 2.5: if God didn’t spare the angels who sinned, and the ungodly in Noah’s day (though saving Noah)], and [2.6] if God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah “and made them an example of what is coming to the ungodly” but [2.7] rescued righteous Lot who was “greatly distressed by the licentiousness of the lawless,” [2.8] for he was daily “tormented in his righteous soul by their lawless deeds that he saw and heard,” [2.9] “then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment [2.10]—especially those who *indulge their flesh in depraved lust* [*opisō sarkos en epithumia miasmou*], and who despise authority.”

**Luther Bibel** (1907 ed., 1968 ed.): “wandeln nach dem Fleisch in der unreinen Lust.” **Zürcher Bibel** (1954): “in Begierde nach Befleckung [fremden] Fleisch nachlaufen.” **KJV:** “walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness.” **Nouveau Testament** (3d, rev. ed., n.d. [1974?]): “courrent après la chair dans leur appétit d’ordures.” **The Complete Bible: An American Translation** (1923, 1927, 1939, 1948): “indulge in passions that defile them.” **RSV:** “indulge in the lust of defiling passion.” **New World Translation** (rev. ed. 1970): “go on after other flesh with the desire to defile [it].” **The New Testament in Modern English** (J. B. Phillips, 1957): “indulged all the foulness of their lower natures.” **NEB:** “follow their abominable lusts.” **NIV:** “follow the corrupt desire of their sinful natures.” **Today’s English Version** (1976): “follow their filthy bodily lusts.” **Contemporary English Version** (1995): “don’t think of anything except their

own filthy desires.”

[→*Sodom and Gomorrah as a byword for destruction caused by “licentiousness” and “lawless deeds.” “depraved lust” in NRSV 2.10 might suggest same-sex relations, but note the other translations and the translation in the standard Greek-English lexikon (Danker-Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, 3d ed. [2000] of Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexikon of the New Testament), s.v. miasmos: “follow after the flesh in corrupting desire.”*]

**Jude 7** [*Context: vss. 5-7 are somewhat parallel to 2 Pet above. After mentioning rescue from Egypt and angels who sinned:*] *v. 7: “Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”*

[The **NRSV** footnote to “pursued unnatural lust” offers a literal translation of the Greek: “*went after other flesh.*” So also **Luther Bibel** (1907 ed.): “gehuret haben und nach einem anderen Fleisch gegangen sind”; **Luther Bibel** (1968 ed.): “Unzucht getrieben haben und fremdem Fleisch nachgegangen sind.” Likewise **KJV**: “giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh” [marginal note on “strange”: “Gr. *other*”]. **Zürcher Bibel** (1954): “Unzucht trieben und wesen einer andern Gattung fleischlich nachstellten.” **Nouveau Testament** (3d, rev. ed., n.d. [1974?]): “s’*étaient livrées de semblable manière à la prostitution et avaient couru après des êtres d’une autre nature*” (footnote: refers to vices “contre nature des habitants de Sodome et Gomorre,” Gen. 19). **The Complete Bible: An American Translation** (1923, 1927, 1939, 1948): “immorality and unnatural vice.” **RSV**: “acted immorally and indulged in unnatural lust.” **The New Testament in Modern English** (J. B. Phillips, 1957): “Gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.” **NEB**: “committed fornication and followed unnatural lusts.” **NIV**: “gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.” **New World Translation** (rev. ed. 1970): “had committed fornication excessively and gone out after other flesh for unnatural use.” **Today’s English Version** (1976): “indulged in sexual immorality and perversion.” **Contemporary English Version** (1995): “became immoral and did all sorts of sexual sins.” Danker-Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, 3d ed. [2000] of Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexikon of the New Testament**, s.v. *sarx* 3b: “Of flesh other than human”; in Jude 7: “*after another kind of flesh*” (cf. Judges 2.12 in the Greek translation of the Old Testament: “after other deities”); “i.e. of divine messengers who take on [flesh] when they appear to humans”; others interpret the passage as referring to “same-sex activity.”]

[→*Sodom and Gomorrah as examples of “sexual immorality” and “unnatural lust” OR going “after other flesh.”*]

**Rev. 11.8** [*Context: 11.7: prophecy against Jerusalem; the beast will kill God’s two witnesses (11.3-6) and [11.8] “their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically [pneumatikos] called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.” [→Jerusalem in code language is called Sodom and Egypt, both being examples of sinful habitations but with no sin specified.]*