

Sunday Message Notes – Better Bible Reading in 2026

Genesis Part 4 - “Primeval History: Abram, Lot, Sodom and Gomorrah”

Warning from Dietrich Bonhoeffer (executed in 1945 for speaking truth to power in Nazi Germany):

“...the desire to hold things together, to not burn bridges, to believe that patient presence will accomplish more than prophetic confrontation. In situations of escalating complicity, the **neutral middle** doesn't moderate the extremes. It provides cover for them. It legitimizes the trajectory by refusing to name it. It allows the temperature to keep rising while counseling patience and calm. At a certain point, neutrality becomes its own form of complicity. The moderate position becomes the enabler of the radical outcome. Obedience to God and Christlike ethical behavior supersedes obedience to the state.”

Summary: A critical, academic reading of the Abram–Lot epic and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 13–19) understands this narrative as a critique of violent social order and exclusion, rather than a condemnation of same-sex intimacy. The threatened sexual violence in Genesis 19 functions to expose a masculinist domination, not to prohibit same gender desire or consensual sex. Lot's offer of his daughters (Gen 19:6–8) reveals the moral corruption of patriarchal hospitality, which undermines any attempt to read Lot as a moral example. Prophetic interpretations, particularly Ezekiel 16:49–50, clarify Sodom's sin as **arrogance, neglect of the poor, and inhospitality**. Read critically, the Sodom epic warns against societies structured by social hierarchies, sexual violence, and patriarchal neglect of daughters.

I. Before Ishmael and Isaac, there was Lot.

A. Lot's father, Haran (Abram's brother), dies and Abram raises Lot (Gen. 11:27–28)

1. **Genesis 12:4** So “Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him.”

B. Abram and Lot go separate ways.

1. **Genesis 13:5–7** “Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together... and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock.”

C. Lot in Sodom.

1. The Depravity of Sodom. **Genesis 19:5-8** “and they called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them.’⁶ Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him,⁷ and said, ‘I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.’”

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a. The men of the city demand to “know” the visitors. In this context, “knowing” functions as coercive domination, not consensual intimacy. **This scene depicts rape culture, not same-sex desire.**

D. Understanding the sin of Sodom.

1. Ezekiel 16:49–50 “This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.”

a. No reference to sexual orientation or same-sex intimacy. Sodom’s sin is structural injustice, arrogance, and neglect. This supports a justice-centered, non-sexualized reading of Genesis 19. This is one of the strongest canonical correctives to anti-queer weaponization of the Bible.

2. Jesus and Sodom (New Testament Reframing).

a. Matthew 10:14–15 / Luke 10:10–12 Sodom invoked in relation to hospitality and reception, not sexuality:

Matthew 10:14–15 “If anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.”

Luke 10:10–12 “But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.”

b. Confirms that early Christian interpretation links Sodom to inhospitality, and not to queer bodies or same gender loving relationships.

3. Plot Twist: The World “IN FRONT” of the text question / application.

a. Is Ezekiel’s and Jesus’s definition of the sin of Sodom (e.g., inhospitable to foreigners, prideful, excess of food, prosperous ease, neglect for the poor and needy) resonant with current Evangelical Christian political ideologies?

b. Consider the irony of the Christian church relegating the sin of Sodom to a condemnation of the Q+ community, all the while, the sin of Sodom actually being foundational to the rise of Christian Nationalism.

E. The Evils of Patriarchy.

1. Definition- a social system where men control disproportionate shares of social, political, economic, and religious power, often leading to women and girls having subordinate roles.

a. Lot is pictured as hospitable. Lot’s daughters are situated as disposable property or currency (e.g., offered to rapists to protect the male guests).

b. Compare this with the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter (Judges 11). Daughters in this patriarchal culture are seen as expendable property. Consider the patriarchal implications of God stopping the sacrifice of Isaac, yet allowing the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter.

c. Lot is still called “righteous” later (2 Peter), which makes this morally disturbing.

