

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Sodom Would've Repented, If...****Sodom Would've Repented, If... - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/9/16 17:40**

Disclaimer: The scripture passage I am about to mention here can possibly open up a big can of worms and be the cause of ill-willed debate among Christians, and that is not my intention in sharing it here. I was meditating on this passage lately and thought it was a heavy portion of scripture to consider:

20 Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 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." - Matthew 11:20-24

The part that really struck me as being heavy is the part about the people in those cities (Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom) being spoken of as being more disposed to repent than the people in the cities being rebuked by Christ. In other words, Christ is saying that He knew that the people of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom would have been more open, more receptive to His miracles and preaching than these other cities where He had done most of His miracles. So if certain conditions were met the people in those cities (Tyre, Sidon and Sodom) would have repented and been saved. Yet God in His sovereignty did not choose to provide those cities with those kinds of miracles that would have led to their salvation, because God is not a debtor to sinful men.

By contrast, God graciously provided the people of Nineveh with the means of salvation through the preaching of Jonah.

I'm not sure what this says about man's "free will", considering the fact that the people of those cities of Old Testament times would have repented had Christ done His miracles and preached there.

Heavy. One of those things in which we must trust God's wisdom and righteous ways even if we don't fully understand it all this side of heaven.

**Re: Sodom Would've Repented, If... - posted by rookie (), on: 2014/9/16 20:37**

Two thoughts, first Christ was sent to specific generation within God's plan. So one must also consider the Scripture you sighted within that context.

Secondly,

Gen 18:25

"Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Gen 18:26

So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

Gen 18:27

Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord:

Gen 18:28

"Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it."

Gen 18:29

And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not d

o it for the sake of forty.â€

Gen 18:30

Then he said, â€œLet not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?â€ So He said, â€œI will not do it if I find thirty there.â€

Gen 18:31

And he said, â€œIndeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?â€ So He said, â€œI will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.â€

Gen 18:32

Then he said, â€œLet not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?â€ And He said, â€œI will not destroy it for the sake of ten.â€

Sodom would have been spared if 10 righteous men were found in it. Remember, God is not willing that any should perish but all come to repentance. So as Paul writes...

Rom 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Rom 1:19

because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

Rom 1:20

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

The men of Sodom were "without excuse."

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/9/16 20:51**

If the men of Sodom were without excuse why did Jesus say they would have repented had they seen the miracles he performed? They were not given that opportunity.

Unless Jesus was exaggerating to make a point.

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/9/16 23:36**

Good points/observations rookie and TMK. Indeed, this is a passage and topic that requires much deep, prayerful consideration and wrestling with.

rookie, in considering this passage I struggled with reconciling it with the truth of God not being willing that any should perish and not desiring the death of the wicked but rather their repentance-Ezek.33:11.

TMK, I'd say that even if Sodom was not placed in a certain situation in which they would have repented, God is still righteous in their destruction and damnation because of their wickedness. They remain without excuse because they chose their evil ways and refused to repent without miracles. They had enough light to condemn them.

But you bring up a good point about the possibility of Christ using hyperbole. We know He used hyperbole in other passages such as Matthew 5 where He says one should cut off a hand and pluck out an eye if they cause one to sin.

Another thing that comes out from this passage in Matthew 11 is the issue of degrees of punishment in hell. Although all who die in their sins will receive eternal punishment, not all will be punished exactly alike in terms of degree of punishment.

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/9/17 5:03**

oraco... What your seeing there is gods election of grace ,god choses not to save those at Sodom as an example of judgment and his sovereign elective choice

**Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2014/9/17 6:11**

Is it possible that we are confusing two different things here and equating them to be one and the same? What I mean is that the destruction being spoken of is, is a physical destruction of temporal and mortal things. This often comes to a nation or city as a whole entity. On the other hand eternal judgement (which Jesus also speaks of) is a different thing and will always be applied to each individual as they respond to God and His righteous requirements.

So we should not equate the destruction of these cities and people in them as one and the same as eternal judgment. For example as Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, it does not mean every citizen of that city was eternally saved. In like manner when years later Nineveh was destroyed by God's judgment, it is possible that there could have been some that died who inherited eternal life based on their faith in God.

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/9/17 6:21**

Heydave-

You make a good point- i think often we assume everyone in Ninevah repented- and that may not be the case. As to Sodom, apparently only a very few- likely Lot's family, were Godly in any sense (based on Abraham's negotiation with God)

I did not mean to suggest in my post that Sodom did not get what they deserved. Nasty folks. There are some similar episodes in the book of Judges that are similarly stomach turning.

Guess that gives the phrase "those living in darkness have seen a great Light" special emphasis.

It definitely seems that Jesus was making a distinction between plain old ignorance and **\*\*willful\*\*** ignorance. The people in Jesus's day who saw what he did but did not repent (like the Pharisees) were willfully ignorant. A dishonest position to serve your own interests. People in Sodom maybe should have known better, but it wasn't like they were being evangelized on a regular basis.

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/9/17 21:46**

brothagary writes:

Quote:  
-----oraco... What your seeing there is gods election of grace ,god choses not to save those at Sodom as an example of judgment and his sovereign elective choice  
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I can see how this passage can be quite difficult to interpret for those on both sides of the "debate". If we say that man has no free will and God sovereignly chose not to save Sodom, the question remains, how is it that they would have repented had they seen Christ's miracles? That would seem to imply they could have chosen to repent. And if we say that man has a free will and that Sodom was not saved because they themselves chose not to be saved (though that was not God's desire), the question remains, why did God not allow them to live during the time of Christ's miracles so that they would have been saved?

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Interesting point brother. The difficulty I'd have in agreeing with you on that is in the fact that Christ is speaking of eternal judgment in that passage, of how it will be more tolerable for certain people than for others in that eternal judgment. Christ says that if those people in OT times would have seen Christ's miracles, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. I'd take that to mean a full repentance unto salvation, unless He may be referring to some type of mere reformation of behavior which would have withheld God's temporal judgment.

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/9/18 1:48**

Oraco if mans will is not free it makes no difference ,Ezekiel says that god will cause them to walk in his judgments ,so according to the bible even if mans will is in bondage to his evil desires and emotions ,god can influence him and through the process of regeneration causes man to be willing to obey ,then the words become come true that ,He works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure!!

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/9/18 2:00**

Oraco if i can answer your last question ?

it is because deep deep down in the mystery of how god has control and porpoise in in all things ,he chose not to save t hose at Sodom salvation was not offered to them ,i dont think we really no for sure why ,the bible said he also spoke in p arables so that hearing they may not hear and seeing they should not perceive lets they should turn and be saved , he s aid in you it has been given to no the mystery's but to them it has not,Jesus also said no man can come to me unless he is drawing by the the father. It is interesting to look at the context of this last statement that Jesus made ,,it shows that nether were some of the Pharisees offered salvation .John the baptizer said who warned you to flee from the wrath to come ,implying that he wasn't there for that brood of vipers

**Re: Sodom Would've Repented, If..., on: 2014/9/19 11:08**

This may sound rather awkward, but if u give it a thought it will solve the puzzle here. In the 18th century so many in sub saharan africa died of malaria. If "choloroquene" had been discovered then they won't have died. Folks the question is why was the drug not discovered then? Answer: science was not as advanced as it latter became. So u see brethren, it w as a question of dispensation. Sodom rejected the available means of grace as at that time. It was not yet time for this b etter means, for had it been, surely at least 10persons would have accepted it, and based on that 10, they had been spa red. GOD walks by dispensation u do not suppose it was unwise that Jesus did not come in the time of Abraham, do u?

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/9/19 13:07**

lyke writes:

Quote:  
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I hear you and agree that God works by dispensation, but consider Acts 17:26, "And He has made from one blood ever y nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of t heir dwellings."

According to that scripture, God could have switched this thing around so that the people of Sodom could have been bor n during the time of Christ and the others during the time of Sodom's destruction. But He sovereignly chose not to do tha t for reasons known only to Him.

brothagary writes:

Quote:  
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Yes, I agree that God has to work in us by His Spirit for us to be regenerated. But again, what puzzled me was that the people of Sodom would have been more receptive and would have repented. That seems to challenge the view which says man has no free will of his own when it comes to repentance unto salvation. And it seems to challenge the view which says all men are equally dead in sin in terms of their inability to choose to repent. It seems from that passage that some are more dead in sin and depraved than others, does it not?

brothagary writes:

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I agree with you there brother.

I'm leaning toward this issue being part of His secret counsel, as Deut. 29:29 says, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

I shared the same OP on my Facebook and received this comment from the pastor of the church where I fellowship, which I think sums it up well:

Quote:  
-----"Thinking about such things, Paul summed up his response like this:

"33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!  
34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"  
35 "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"  
36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." Romans 11:33-36...

And "heavy" is exactly right! In Hebrew, the word for glory, chabod, means "heavy, weighty." God is glorious, weighty with substance and depth beyond our ability to comprehend!"  
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**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/9/19 22:59**

I dont think it challenges the view of total depravity ,or bondage of the will ,can you explain how you think it does .

Verses like god deals to each man the measure of faith ,and perhaps god will grant repentance ,shows that with out god it is imposible to have faith and repent , i think the scripture eludes to the holy spirit drawing man to repent before and during regeneration ..

To start out with repentance from sin requires the holy spirit conviction ,so with out god there no conviction or turning from or changing ones mind about sin .

the bible says in two places that we were slaves"" to sin;;; but if the son sets you free you will be free indeed ,Paul Said we were free in regards to righteousness ,but now we have becomes slaves to righteousness and free from the dominion of sin ..

our wills were bond slaves to sin till god intervned

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/9/19 23:22**

I dont really no what Calvinists teach ,but i see that some men respond not from a free will but a will that has been drawn and influenced greatly by another force other then what comes from man ,that be gods free will tempts man not with sin ,but with holy presence ,and at the same time loosens the grip of sin on mans will so that man can not have faith ,but respond to Divine influence ,which is grace ,so i see man as doing something to respond to god ,from a will that is temporarily free by gods grace.

,then god grants saving faith and repentance  
i think my view is in between arminianism and Calvinism .

i dont see any scripture that says my flesh can repent and have faith ,but that in it, that is in me ,dwells no good thing

**Re: Sodom Would've Repented, If... - posted by twayneb (), on: 2014/9/20 13:24**

I think lyke makes a good point. When Jesus rebuked Israel, and specifically the cities where He performed miracles, He spoke of Himself and of His works. He was not speaking in the context of miracles in general (remember the angels that visited Sodom struck the men with blindness so that they could not find the door of Lot's house). Nor was he speaking of having an opportunity to repent. He was speaking specifically of Himself. He might just as well have said, "If I as the Messiah had revealed Myself to the people of those cities, they would have accepted Me as such and responded to my words and my works."

I don't think it is about whom God chose to destroy and whom He chose to spare. I personally don't think the issue of sovereignty enters at all in this event. I think it is about a comparison of a people who Israel know from their own history as worthy of God's wrath and themselves. This statement would have enraged the leaders of Israel, who saw themselves as just according to the Law. Israel was the people whom God chose to be the agents of His revelation of Himself and of the new covenant. Yet He speaks of them as being a stiff-necked people.

It was not in God's plan to reveal Christ through or to the people of Sodom. It was His plan, in the fullness of time, to bring forth Christ of a virgin in Bethlehem in Israel. Yet, they were given the opportunity to repent of the evil that they were doing. Yet I think Jesus recognized that Israel was more stubborn and blind than even the people of Sodom. A pretty stiff charge against Israel indeed.

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/9/24 21:27**

brothagary writes:

Quote:

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Okay, I'll try to explain why I think it seems to challenge that view, but I want to emphasize the words "seems to" because I'm not 100 percent clear on it. But first I want to say I agree with your statements about man being dead in sin and totally lost apart from the Holy Spirit convicting, drawing and regenerating.

I implied that that passage seems to challenge the view of total depravity and irresistible grace because our Lord said that the people of Sodom would have repented if His mighty works were done there. It can seem that He makes a distinction between the hearts of the people of Sodom and the hearts of those whom He rebuked in that passage in Matt. 11. He says they would have been more open or receptive to Him.

So the question that comes to mind is, "Why would Sodom have been more open or receptive? Would it have been a sovereign act of God making them more receptive? If that is the case it would seem unreasonable for these current cities to be rebuked by our Lord, if it was of God's doing that they were more hardened than Sodom. But then again, that misunderstanding may be comparable to the complaint that Paul anticipated in Romans 9:19, "You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?",

which Paul answers with,

"But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

So at the end of the day, I believe the Word teaches both man's responsibility in rejecting God's salvation and God's sovereignty in election. How they both reconcile I don't know and may not understand this side of heaven.

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/9/25 5:08**

oraco lol ,,i see the same problem also but find the scripture teaches both,that man has a part to respond and god is sovereign in saving and drawing and causing us to obey the law .

so with out nullifying the sovereignty of god by elevating the man to absolutely free will , i see that mans will is in bondage to sin and if god left it up to us we would not want to or be able to repent and believe , man are total and utterly depraved when it comes to being receptive to god ,that is the state of the flesh of men ,not able to please god or receive spiritual truth it is foolish to him as Paul said .

So it is up to god to intervene by his sovereign power, when he does only by this grace can men respond and respond is about all the can do ,while it is god who cause man to see him by revaluation and his need for him by revaluation ,and the response's made my men is Christs spirit in the man inducing not the flesh of man but the spirit of men to responded ,on certainty chosen ones gods calling is effectual and total effective ,in my opinion due to gods view of men and the world ,which is not limited to time past and future ,so god noing the response he can induce in certainty ones is the basis of his election and predestination ,,on others his his calling is not made by him to be effective by it is the smell of death to them and always was to be that way on others he pass them by completely and never calls them

So i think men do respond but not from free will,but from a god regenerated will from the new man or the seeds of that new man which is Christ in you , or out of the the very process of the new birth when faith is birthed in men through the very beginnings of the new birth man chooses god ,but really it is Christ in you or him that works both in you to will and to do ,Christ is working the innerheart of men to respond to the father as a son would to his dady ,

So some how in this holy concoction god is complete sovereign he the author and finisher of our faith and men respond some how through this over shadowing and moving of god in the creature .

Jesus said i dont do my own will but i the will of him who sent me ,some how god is working his will outside us and in us to respond to him ,to will and to do for his good pleasure .Yet we still remain the creature and he remains god . In the same way i can manipulate and effect my wifes will and choice in matters through revaluation or reveling my spoken word to her and change her stubborn fleshy will ,god does the same but on a sublime level to unsearchable to grasp, or better his ways are past finding out like Paul said

Paul said in me that is in my flesh nothing good dwells

god works his law of the spirit past us who we are ,and plants in us the new seed , and we die and our new man who makes the response to god will and calling is not the man of Adam race who was brought to the corruption of the flesh ,but a NEW RACE of man who is created after the heavenly man ,whose will is not in bondage nor free but mingled with the will of god and is being conformed to the image of Christ through a process,bondservants of the righteousness of god imputed fully then gradual imparted till we are changed in the twinkling of the eye when a major shift takes place and probable continues for ever to a conformity that is past reaching .

Sorry brother iv gone of track a bit

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/9/25 6:31**

The one major problem I have with the view that man does not have the "free will" to repent is that John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul all commanded men to repent. In fact God commands it.

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30)

Jesus and John the Baptist came preaching "Repent."

Now, it would not be very nice to command people to repent if they do not have the power within themselves to do so.

If what you are saying is true, Jesus and John the B and Paul should have preached: "God commands you to repent! (and if you are really lucky, He will grant you the ability to do so)."

Scripture seems abundantly clear that it is man's sole responsibility to repent. Don't we keep saying that even those born in the darkest jungles have enough light to realize there is a God and where they stand in relation to Him? My point is that man is not helpless. He may be depraved, but He has the ability to make a choice about this matter. I am not saying that the HS does not have a role in convicting and drawing him, but man is still free to accept or quench this drawing.

I don't know why these incredibly tenuous theological systems were created in the first place. People had too much time on their hands back then I suspect.

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/9/25 6:51**

God commanded Israel to obey the law of Moses yet the motive Paul said God had was so that Israel would know they were guilty of sin it was their school master to lead them to the need of a Saviour who could keep it. Paul said that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God, for through the law is the knowledge of sin, the law was intended to humble and convict the world of sin, well Israel of sin all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God that is all in context, Peter said no of us could bear the law neither could our fathers.

so to be consistent with scripture God commands things no man but Jesus could fulfill, that's a clear teaching, the law was perfect and we were sinners.

tmk theology comes from studying the Bible and seeing the seeming contradictions and trying to understand God's full word without leaving out bits and pieces.

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/9/25 6:59**

There is other scripture that shows God commanding some that can't be done in their own strength, just take Moses, God commanded him to do the impossible and free the Israelites, just think about it there's much in the Bible regarding that.

What does repent mean, change your mind, turn to God and turn from sin ....

God changes our hearts and minds, he gives us Revelation of himself turning our attention to him and Jesus sets us free from the dominion of sin, so he turns us from sin.

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/9/25 10:04**

Hey Gary-

We just have to disagree on this point. No big deal.

**Re: Sodom Would've Repented, If... - posted by KPYee, on: 2014/9/25 12:38**

God's ultimate purpose is to refine men and to make us fit subjects of heaven . He is sifting the wheat from tares. Accordingly he will give enough light to enable the righteous to know and thus to seek as well as to desire him. But not enough light to make it fashionable to be righteous and easy to be totally committed to him . Repentance and righteousness will always come with a price on this earth . It will always be a struggle for men who seek him . Its for this reason he rains on the wicked and the righteous and he forbids the demons to testify about him while he was on earth . Sufficient light to come to him is always given, But never overwhelming light .

**Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/9/25 15:29**

I was just studying another passage (in Matt. 12) where Jesus tells a man with a withered hand to stretch it out so He could heal it. After reading Matthew Henry's take on it I could not resist sharing it here as I believe he gives a good balance there on this topic of man's responsibility and God's sovereignty. Henry writes:

"Now the manner of the cure is observable; he said to the man, "Stretch forth thy hand, exert thyself as well as thou canst;" and he did so, and it was restored whole. This, as other cures Christ wrought, had a spiritual significance. (1.) By nature our hands are withered, we are utterly unable of ourselves to doing any thing that is good. (2.) It is Christ only, by the power of his grace, that cures us; he heals the withered hand by putting life into the dead soul, works in us both to will and to do. (3.) In order to our cure, he commands us to stretch forth our hands, to improve our natural powers, and do as well as we can; to stretch them out in prayer to God, to stretch them out to lay hold on Christ by faith, to stretch them out in holy endeavors. Now this man could not stretch forth his withered hand of himself, any more than the impotent man could arise and carry his bed, or Lazarus come forth out of his grave; yet Christ bid him do it. God's commands to us to do the duty which of ourselves we are not able to do are no more absurd or unjust, than this command to the man with the withered hand, to stretch it forth; for with the command, there is a promise of grace which is given by the word. Turn ye at my reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit, Prov. 1:23. Those who perish are as inexcusable as this man would have been, if he had not attempted to stretch forth his hand, and so had not been healed. But those who are saved have no more to boast of than this man had of contributing to his own cure, by stretching forth his hand, but are as much indebted to the power and grace of Christ as he was."

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/9/26 2:25**

Yep no big deal tmk .....

Oraco thats what i was trying to say ,mans responce is purely through gods grace ,not from the flesh or from the adamic nature ,so there is no credit given to men at all ,it is all god ,all the glory and praise goes to him . god excepts nothing that emanates from the fallen fleshly man ...

blessings